



LATER CANADIAN POEMS

EDITED BY

• • • J. E. Wetherell, B.A. • • •

WITH PORTRAITS.

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LATER CANADIAN POEMS.

LATER

Canadian Poems

Edited by
J. E. WETHERELL, B.A.

*"But thou, my Country, dream not thou!
Wake, and behold how night is done,—
How on thy breast, and o'er thy brow,
Bursts the uprising sun!"*

—C. G. D. ROBERTS.

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PREFACE.

The title of this little anthology suggests the scope and limitations of the book. It contains selections from the productions of the best known of our younger Canadian poets. The volume, it is believed, contains no poem published before the year 1880.

The supplement, which is an addition to the original plan of the book, represents within somewhat narrow limits the notable work produced in recent years by some of our women writers.

Grateful acknowledgments are due to the authors represented in this collection for kind permission to use their poems and for the generous aid which they have given me. The poems that represent the work of the late George Frederick Cameron, are here published through the courtesy of his brother, the Rev. C. J. Cameron, M.A., of Brockville. To Mrs. Crawford of Toronto I am indebted for the use of the two poems of her daughter, the late Isabella Valancy Crawford.

J. E. W.

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LATER CANADIAN POEMS.

George Frederick Cameron.

In After Days.

I will accomplish that and this,
And make myself a thorn to Things—
Lords, councillors and tyrant kings—
Who sit upon their thrones and kiss

The rod of Fortune ; and are crowned
The sovereign masters of the earth
To scatter blight and death and dearth
Wherever mortal man is found.

I will do this and that, and break
The backbone of their large conceit,
And loose the sandals from their feet,
And show 'tis holy ground they shake.

So sang I in my earlier days,
Ere I had learned to look abroad

Later Canadian Poems.

And see that more than monarchs trod
Upon the form I fain would raise.

Ere I, in looking toward the land
That broke a triple diadem,
That grasped at Freedom's garment hem,
Had seen her, sword and torch in hand,

A freedom-fool : ere I had grown
To know that Love is freedom's strength—
France taught the world that truth at length!—
And Peace her chief foundation stone.

Since then, I temper so my song
That it may never speak for blood ;
May never say that ill is good ;
Or say that right may spring from wrong :

Yet am what I have ever been—
A friend of Freedom, staunch and true,
Who hate a tyrant, be he—you—
A people,—sultan, czar, or queen.

And then the Freedom-haters came
And questioned of my former song,
If *now* I held it right, or wrong :
And still my answer was the same :—

George Frederick Cameron,

The good still moveth towards the good :

The ill still moveth towards the ill :

But who affirmeth that we will

Not form a nobler brotherhood

When communists, fanatics, those

Who howl their "*vives*" to Freedom's name

And yet betray her unto shame,

Are dead and confined with her foes.

The Defeat of Love.

"I go," said Love to his friends one day,

"To a balmy island known to me,

To a happy island leagues away

Set star-fair far in a Southern sea.

For there the mate that affection means

To give my heart has waited long :

She calls—I go to those sweeter scenes

Of life and love and summer and song.

Those sweeter scenes where the wild grape grows

To thrill the throat of the land with wine:

Later Canadian Poems.

Where all is sweet as is the rose
To the bee that hangs to its heart divine !”

He built a boat of deep-sea shell,
Or meet for calm, or common gale ;
He bade us all a kind farewell,
Then took the tiller and spread the sail.

We watched him off—the wind blew free,
Like electric spark he sped from the shore ;
He crossed the bar ; he won the sea ;
Then night came down and closed him o’er.

* * * * *

Well, days and weeks and months grew old,
A year grew perfect and complete,
Ere to our ears the tidings rolled
Of Love and Love’s too dark defeat.

The maiden wearied of his delay,—
For adverse grew both wind and tide,—
And said, “ I will meet him on the way
And guide him here !” She smiled in pride ;

For she was royal, and had ships
And men to mark her least command ;

George Frederick Cameron.

And ere the word had left her lips,
Her barge was ready to leave the land.

* * * * *

And she sailed Northward far and fast,
And he sailed Southward steady and true :
They came together at length, *but passed*
Each other one night, and neither knew.

So he sailed Southward o'er the main,
And she sailed towards the Pole-star fair,
Till storms arose and wrecked them twain,
And no one knows the when or where !

Ah, me ! How often, or first or last,
The lover and loved—the fitting two—
Have met on Life's large sea, and passed
Each other forever, while neither knew !

Later Canadian Poems.

Apart.

Yes, love of mine, and fair as any fair—
Song of my soul, and soul of all this song !
I will forgive thee, though thou makest bare
And bleak my life :—yea, by thy glorious hair
And violet eyes, I will forgive the wrong.

I will forgive thee, even as I expect
To be forgiven of all my own ill deeds
By Him who holds all people His elect,—
Who judges kindly, caring not for creeds.

I do forgive ! Albeit it hurts the heart
To say—It might have been !—still o'er and o'er ;
To ask, yet find no aid in any art,
To know that we must walk life's ways apart—
O lovelessness of love !—for evermore.

George Frederick Cameron.

First Love.

Ah, love is deathless ! we do cheat
Ourselves who say that we forget
Old fancies : last love may be sweet,
First love is sweeter yet.

And day by day more sweet it grows
Forevermore, like precious wine,
As Time's thick cobwebs o'er it close,
Until it is divine.

Grows dearer every day and year,
Let other loves come, go at will :
Although the last love may be dear,
First love is dearer still.

Later Canadian Poems.

Standing on Tiptoe.

Standing on tiptoe ever since my youth
Striving to grasp the future just above,
I hold at length the only future—Truth,
And Truth is Love.

I feel as one who being awhile confined
Sees drop to dust about him all his bars :—
The clay grows less, and, leaving it, the mind
Dwells with the stars.

George Frederick Cameron.

“Ah Me! The Mighty Love.”

Ah, me ! the mighty love that I have borne
To thee, sweet Song ! A perilous gift was it
My mother gave me that September morn
When sorrow, song, and life were at one altar lit.

A gift more perilous than the priest's : his lore
Is all of books and to his books extends ;
And what they see and know he knows—no more,
And with their knowing all his knowing ends.

A gift more perilous than the painter's : he
In his divinest moments only sees
The inhumanities of color, we
Feel each and all the inhumanities.

Later Canadian Poems.

Wisdom—A Sonnet.

Wisdom immortal from immortal Jove
Shadows more beauty with her virgin brows
Than is between the pleasant breasts of Love
Who makes at will and breaks her random vows,
And hath a name all earthly names above :
The noblest are her offspring ; she controls
The times and seasons—yea, all things that are—
The heads and hands of men, their hearts and souls,
And all that moves upon our mother star,
And all that pauses 'twixt the peaceful poles.
Nor is she dark and distant, coy and cold,—
But all in all to all who seek her shrine
In utter truth, like to that king of old
Who wooed and won—yet by no right divine.

George Frederick Cameron.

Past and Future.

The Past !—In even our oldest songs
 Regret for older past appears,—
The Past with all its bitter wrongs,
 And bitter, buried years :
With all its woes and crimes and shames,—
 Its rule of sword, and king, and cowl—
Its scourges, tortures, axes, flames,
 And myriad murders foul !

The Future ! To our latest lays
 A common strain of longing clings
For future nights, and future days,
 And future thoughts and things.
The Future ! Who of us will see
 This Future,—in its brightness bask ?
Ye ask the Future ?—Let it be !
 Ye know not what ye ask.

The Present ! Ah, the mightiest mind
 Holds only that. We may not see
The dim days, or the undefined
 And unformed ages yet to be :
Enough for us that if we do
 The present deed that should be done,
The three shall open to our view—
 Past, Present, Future—One !

Later Canadian Poems.

On Life's Sea.

On Life's sea ! Full soon

 The evening cometh—cheerless, sad and cold ;
Past is the golden splendor of the noon,
 The darkness comes apace—and I grow old.

Yet the ship of Fate

 Drives onward o'er the waters mountain high !
And now the day goes out the western gate
 And not a star is smiling in the sky.

Gloom before—behind !

 Rude billows battling with an iron shore
On either hand : anon, the chilling wind
 Smiting the cordage with an angry roar.

Then the compass veers

 And doth avail not : for the dust of earth
Hath marred its beauty, and the rust of years
 Hath made its mechanism of little worth.

And tho' oft I gaze

 Into the lost, yet ever lovely Past,
And strive to call a power from perished days
 With which to dare the midnight and the blast,

George Frederick Cameron.

The power flies my hand ;
And my sad heart grows wearier day by day,
Beholding not the lights which line the land
And throw their smile upon the desert way :

For the star of Hope
Shed but one beam along the lonely path,
Then slid behind the clouds adown the slope,
And set forever in a sea of wrath !

Yet the ship moves on—
Aye, ever on ! still drifting with the tide,
With Faith alone to look or lean upon,
As pilot o'er the waters wild and wide.

Yet for all, I feel
My bark shall bound on billows gentler rolled.
Be Faith my pilot, then, until the keel
Shall kiss and clasp the glittering sands of gold !

Later Canadian Poems.

The Golden Text.

You ask for fame or power ?
Then up, and take for text :—
This is my hour,
And not the next, nor next !

Oh, wander not in ways
Of ease or indolence !
Swift come the days,
And swift the days go hence.

Strike ! while the hand is strong :
Strike ! while you can and may :
Strength goes ere long,—
Even yours will pass away.

Sweet seem the fields, and green,
In which you fain would lie :
Sweet seems the scene
That glads the idle eye :

Soft seems the path you tread,
And balmy soft the air,—
Heaven overhead
And all the earth seems fair :

George Frederick Cameron.

But, would your heart aspire
To noble things,—to claim
Bard's, statesman's fire—
Some measure of their fame ;

Or, would you seek and find
The secret of success
With mortal kind ?
Then, up from idleness !

Up—up ! all fame, all power
Lies in this golden text :—
*This is my hour—
And not the next, nor next*

Later Canadian Poems.

To the West Wind.

West wind, come from the west land,
Fair and far !
Come from the fields of the best land
Upon our star !

Come, and go to my sister
Over the sea :
Tell her how much I have missed her,
Tell her for me !

Odors of lilies and roses—
Set them astir ;
Cull them from gardens and closes,—
Give them to her !

Say I have loved her, and love her :
Say that I prize
Few on the earth here above her,
Few in the skies !

Bring her, if worth the bringing,
A brother's kiss :
Should she ask for a song of his singing,
Give her this !

George Frederick Cameron.

The Way of the World.

We sneer and we laugh with the lip—the most of us do it,
Whenever a brother goes down like a weed with the tide ;
We point with the finger and say—Oh, we knew it ! we
knew it !
But, see ! we are better than he was, and we will abide.

He walked in the way of his will—the way of desire,
In the Appian way of his will without ever a bend ;
He walked in it long, but it led him at last to the mire,—
But we who are stronger will stand and endure to the end.

His thoughts were all visions—all fabulous visions of flowers,
Of bird and of song and of soul which is only a song ;
His eyes looked all at the stars in the firmament, ours
Were fixed on the earth at our feet, so we stand and are
strong.

He hated the sight and the sound and the sob of the city ;
He sought for his peace in the wood and the musical wave ;
He fell, and we pity him never, and why should we pity—
Yea, why should we mourn for him—we who still stand,
who are brave ?

Later Canadian Poems.

An Answer.

"Can it be good to die?" you question, friend;

"Can it be good to die, and move along
Still circling round and round, unknowing end,
Still circling round and round amid the throng
Of golden orbs attended by their moons—

To catch the intonation of their song
As on they flash, and scatter nights, and noons,
To worlds like ours, where things like us belong?"

To *me* 'tis idle saying, "He is dead,"

Or, "Now he sleepeth and shall wake no more;
The little flickering, fluttering life is fled,
Forever fled, and all that *was* is o'er."

I have a faith—that life and death are *one*,
That each depends upon the self-same thread,
And that the seen and unseen rivers run
To one calm sea, from one clear fountain-head.

I have a faith—that man's most potent mind
May cross the willow-shaded stream nor sink;
I have a faith—when he has left behind
His earthly vesture on the river's brink,

George Frederick Cameron.

When all his little fears are torn away,
His soul may beat a pathway through the tide,
And, disencumbered of its coward-clay,
Emerge immortal on the sunnier side.

So, say :—It must be good to die, my friend !

It must be good and more than good, I deem ;
'Tis all the replication I may send—

For deeper swimming seek a deeper stream.
It must be good, or reason is a cheat,

It must be good, or life is all a lie,
It must be good and more than living sweet,
It must be good—*or man would never die.*

What Matters It.

I.

What reck we of the creeds of men?—

We see them—we shall see again.

What reck we of the tempest's shock ?

What reck we where our anchor lock ?

On golden marl or mould—

In salt-sea flower or riven rock—

What matter—so it hold ?

Later Canadian Poems.

II.

What matters it the spot we fill
On Earth's green sod when all is said?—
When feet and hands and heart are still
And all our pulses quieted?
When hate or love can kill nor thrill,—
When we are done with life and dead?

III.

So we be haunted night nor day
By any sin that we have sinned,
What matter where we dream away
The ages?—In the isles of Ind,
In Tybee, Cuba, or Cathay,
Or in some world of winter wind?

IV.

It may be I would wish to sleep
Beneath the wan, white stars of June,
And hear the southern breezes creep
Between me and the mellow moon :
But so I do not wake to weep
At any night or any noon,

George Frederick Cameron.

V.

And so the generous gods allow
Repose and peace from evil dreams,
It matters little where or how
My couch be spread :—by moving streams,
Or on some eminent mountain's brow
Kist by the morn's or sunset's beams.

VI.

For we shall rest ; the brain that planned,
That thought or wrought or well or ill,
At gaze like Joshua's moon shall stand,
Not working any work or will,
While eye and lip and heart and hand
Shall all be still—shall all be still !



WILLIAM WILFRED CAMPBELL.

William Wilfred Campbell.

(These Poems are taken from "Lake Lyrics" only).

Lazarus.

O Father Abram, I can never rest,
Here in thy bosom in the whitest heaven,
Where love blooms on through days without an even ;
For up through all the paradises seven,
There comes a cry from some fierce, anguished breast.

A cry that comes from out of hell's dark night,
A piercing cry of one in agony,
That reaches me here in heaven white and high ;
A call of anguish that doth never die ;
Like dream-waked infant wailing for the light.

O Father Abram, heaven is love and peace,
And God is good ; eternity is rest.
Sweet would it be to lie upon thy breast
And know no thought but loving to be blest—
Save for that cry that never more will cease.

It comes to me above the angel-lyres,
The chanting praises of the Cherubim ;

Later Canadian Poems.

It comes between my upward gaze and Him,
All-blessed Christ,—a voice from the vague dim,
"O Lazarus, come and ease me of these fires."

*"O Lazarus, I have called thee all these years,
It is so long for me to reach to thee,
Across the ages of this mighty sea,
That loometh dark, dense, like eternity;
Which I have bridged by anguished prayers and tears.*

*"Which I have bridged by knowledge of God's love,
That even penetrates this anguished glare;
A gleaming ray, a tremulous, star-built stair,
A road by which love-hungered souls may fare
Past hate and doubt, to heaven and God above."*

So calleth it ever upward unto me :
It creepeth in through heaven's golden doors ;
It echoes all along the sapphire floors ;
Like smoke of sacrifice, it soars and soars ;
It fills the vastness of eternity.

Until my sense of love is waned and dimmed,
The music-rounded spheres do clash and jar :
No more those spirit-calls from star to star,
The harmonies that float and melt afar,
The belts of light by which all heaven is rimmed.

William Wilfred Campbell.

No more I hear the beat of heavenly wings,
The seraph chanting in my rest-tuned ear ;
I only know a cry, a prayer, a tear,
That rises from the depths up to me here ;
A soul that to me suppliant leans and clings.

O, Father Abram, thou must bid me go
Into the spaces of the deep abyss ;
Where far from us and our God-given bliss,
Do dwell those souls that have done Christ amiss ;
For through my rest I hear that upward woe.

I hear it crying through the heavenly night,
When curv'd, hung in space, the million moons
Lean planet-ward, and infinite space attunes
Itself to silence, as from drear gray dunes
A cry is heard along the shuddering light,

Of wild dusk-bird, a sad, heart-curdling cry,
So comes to me that call from out hell's coasts ;
I see an infinite shore with gaping ghosts ;
This is no heaven with all its shining hosts ;
This is no heaven until that hell doth die.

So spake the soul of Lazarus, and from thence,
Like new-fledged bird from its sun-jewelled nest,
Drunk with the music of the young year's quest ;

Later Canadian Poems.

He sank out into heaven's gloried breast,
Spaceward turned, toward darkness dim, immense.

Hellward he moved like radiant star shot out
From heaven's blue with rain of gold at even,
When Orion's train and that mysterious seven
Move on in mystic range from heaven to heaven,
Hellward he sank, followed by radiant rout.

The liquid floor of heaven bore him up,
With unseen arms, as in his feathery flight
He floated down toward the infinite night ;
But each way downward, on the left and right,
He saw each moon of heaven like a cup

Of liquid, misty fire that shone afar
From sentinel towers of heaven's battlements ;
But onward, winged by love's desire intense,
And sank, space-swallowed, into the immense,
While with him ever widened heaven's bar.

'Tis ages now long-gone since he went out,
Christ-urged, love-driven, across the jasper walls,
But hellward still he ever floats and falls,
And ever nearer come those anguished calls ;
And far behind he hears a glorious shout.

William Wilfred Campbell.

Ode to Thunder Cape.

Storm-beaten cliff, thou mighty cape of thunder ;
Rock-Titan of the north, whose feet the waves beat under ;
Cloud-reared, mist-veiled, to all the world a wonder,
Shut out in thy wild solitude asunder,
 O Thunder Cape, thou mighty cape of storms.

About thy base, like woe that naught assuages,
Throughout the years the wild lake raves and rages ;
One after one, time closes up weird pages ;
But firm thou standest, unchanged, through the ages,
 O Thunder Cape, thou awful cape of storms.

Upon thy ragged front, the storm's black anger,
Like eagle clings, amid the elements' clangor ;
About thee feels the lake's soft sensuous languor ;
But dead alike to loving and to anger,
 Thou towerest bleak, O mighty cape of storms.

Year in, year out, the summer rain's soft beating,
Thy front hath known, the winter's snow and sleeting ;
But unto each thou givest contemptuous greeting.
These hurt thee not through seasons fast and fleeting ;
 O proud, imperious, rock-ribbed cape of storms.

Later Canadian Poems.

In August nights, when on thy under beaches,
The lake to caverns time-weird legends teaches ;
And moon-pearled waves to shadowed shores send speeches
Far into heaven thine awful darkness reaches,
O'ershadowing night ; thou ghostly cape of storms.

In wild October, when the lake is booming
Its madness at thee, and the north is dooming
The season to fiercest hate, still unconsuming,
Over the strife thine awful front is looming ;
Like death in life, thou awful cape of storms.

Across thy rest the wild bee's noonday humming,
And sound of martial hosts to battle drumming,
Are one to thee—no date knows thine incoming ;
The earliest years belong to thy life's summing,
O ancient rock, thou aged cape of storms.

O thou so old, within thy sage discerning,
What sorrows, hates, what dead past loves still-burning,
Couldst thou relate, thine ancient pages turning ;
O thou who seemest ever new lores learning,
O unforgetting, wondrous cape of storms.

O tell me what wild past lies here enchanted ;
What borders thou dost guard, what regions haunted ?
What type of man a little era flaunted,

William Wilfred Campbell.

Then passed and slept ? O tell me thou undaunted,
Thou aged as eld, O mighty cape of storms.

O speak, if thou canst speak, what cities sleeping,
What busy streets, what laughing and what weeping,
What vanished deeds and hopes like dust up-heaping,
Hast thou long held within thy silent keeping ?

O wise old cape, thou rugged cape of storms.

These all have passed, as all that's living passes ;
Our thoughts they wither as the centuries' grasses,
That bloom and rot in bleak, wild lake morasses :
But still thou loomest where Superior glasses
Himself in surge and sleep, O cape of storms.

And thou wilt stay when we and all our dreaming
Lie low in dust. The age's last moon-beaming
Will shed on thy wild front its final gleaming ;
For last of all that's real and all that's seeming,
Thou still wilt linger, mighty cape of storms.

Later Canadian Poems.

The Winter Lakes.

Out in a world of death, far to the northward lying,
Under the sun and the moon, under the dusk and the day;
Under the glimmer of stars and the purple of sunsets dying,
Wan and waste and white, stretch the great lakes away.

Never a bud of spring, never a laugh of summer,
Never a dream of love, never a song of bird;
But only the silence and white, the shores that grow chiller
and dumber,
Wherever the ice-winds sob, and the griefs of winter are
heard.

Crags that are black and wet out of the gray lake looming,
Under the sunset's flush, and the pallid, faint glimmer of
dawn;
Shadowy, ghost-like shores, where midnight surfs are booming
Thunders of wintry woe over the spaces wan.

Lands that loom like spectres, whited regions of winter,
Wastes of desolate woods, deserts of water and shore;
A world of winter and death, within these regions who enter,
Lost to summer and life, go to return no more.

William Wilfred Campbell.

Moons that glimmer above, waters that lie white under,
Miles and miles of lake far out under the night ;
Foaming crests of waves, surfs that shoreward thunder,
Shadowy shapes that flee, haunting the spaces white.

Lonely hidden bays, moon-lit, ice-rimmed, winding,
Fringed by forests and crags, haunted by shadowy shores ;
Hushed from the outward strife, where the mighty surf is
grinding
Death and hate on the rocks, as sandward and landward it
roars.

In the River Bay.

Alone I pause in morning dream
Upon the border of the stream,
Where all the summer melts away,
In mists of wood and sky and bay ;
And voices of the morning wake
In whispers from the distant lake.
With dews down fallen from the night,
The alders scintillate in light.
Reflected in the river pool,

Later Canadian Poems.

The woods bend restful, sweet and cool.
And hidden in their heart away,
A thrush sends forth his roundelay,
Echo'd in the airs above,
Filling all heaven and earth with love.

Above me in the darkling wood,
Through dusks of morning solitude,
Drifting in many a watery moon,
The river chants a sleepy tune.
Far out in front, in shining curves,
Where, sun-cuirassed, his soft tide swerves,
And all the dreams of morning brood,
His shores wind, mirroring in his flood.

With half-shut eyes I muse and see
This morning picture dreamily.
Then throbbeth up within my heart
(Which seemeth nature's counterpart),
A wish to stay and dream for aye,
The morning by this river-bay,
To stay forever and forget
The new desire and old regret,
The doubt, the sorrow, and the curse,
The passions that our spirits nurse ;
Never to dream in morning's fires

William Wilfred Campbell.

The ghosts of vanished, dead desires ;
Never to read in kindling skies
The sadness of reproachful eyes :
Refined, removed of all earth's dross,
Its strife, its sorrow, and its loss,
To be a little child for aye,
Mist-cradled in this river-bay.

The dream is sweet but all too soon,
Is lost its vision, hushed its rune ;
For up along the river-wall
I hear my comrades gaily call :
The dream is broken, life reclaims,
To darker fancies, sterner aims.
I leave my restful river bay,
And worldward once more wend my way

Later Canadian Poems.

The Heart of the Lakes.

There are crags that loom like spectres
Half under the sun and the mist ;
There are beaches that gleam and glisten,
There are ears that open to listen
And lips held up to be kissed.

There are miles and miles of waters
That throb like a woman's breast,
With a glad harmonious motion
Like happiness caught at rest,
As if a heart beat under
In love with its own glad rest ;
Beating and beating forever,
Outward to east and to west.

There are forests that kneel forever,
Robed in the dreamiest haze
That God sends down in the summer
To mantle the gold of its days,
Kneeling and leaning forever
In winding and sinuous bays.

There are birds that like smoke drift over,
With a strange and bodeful cry,

William Wilfred Campbell.

Into the dream and the distance
Of the marshes that southward lie,
With their lonely lagoons and rivers,
Far under the reeling sky.

How Spring Came to the Lake Region.

No passionate cry came over the desolate places,
No answering call from iron-bound land to land ;
But dawns and sunsets fell on mute, dead faces,
And noon and night, death crept from strand to strand.

Till love breathed out across the wasted reaches,
And dipped in rosy dawns from desolate deeps ;
And woke with mystic songs the sullen beaches,
And flamed to life the pale, mute, death-like sleeps.

Then the warm south, with amorous breath inblowing,
Breathed soft o'er breast of wrinkled lake and mere ;
And faces white from scorn of the north's snowing,
Now rosier grew to greet the kindling year.

Later Canadian Poems.

A Lake Memory.

The lake comes throbbing in with voice of pain
 Across these flats, athwart the sunset's glow.
I see her face, I know her voice again,
 Her lips, her breath, O God, as long ago.

To live the sweet past over I would fain,
 As lives the day in the red sunset's fire,
That all these wild, wan marshlands now would stain,
 With the dawn's memories, loves and flushed desire.

I call her back across the vanished years,
 Nor vain—a white-armed phantom fills her place ;
Its eyes the wind-blown sunset fires, its tears
 This rain of spray that blows about my face.



BLISS CARMAN.

Bliss Carman.

The Yule Guest.

And Yanna by the yule log
 Sat in the empty hall,
And watched the goblin firelight
 Caper upon the wall :

The goblins of the hearthstone,
 Who teach the wind to sing,
Who dance the frozen yule away
 And usher back the Spring ;

The goblins of the Northland,
 Who teach the gulls to scream,
Who dance the Autumn into dust,
 The ages into dream.

Like the tall corn was Yanna,
 Bending and smooth and fair,—
His Yanna of the sea-gray eyes
 And harvest-yellow hair.

Later Canadian Poems.

Child of the low-voiced people
Who dwell among the hills,
She had the lonely calm and poise
Of life that waits and wills.

Only to-night a little
With grave regard she smiled,
Remembering the morn she woke
And ceased to be a child.

Outside, the ghostly rampikes,
Those armies of the moon,
Stood while the ranks of stars drew on
To that more spacious noon,—

While over them in silence
Waved on the dusk afar
The gold flags of the Northern light
Streaming with ancient war.

And when below the headland
The riders of the foam
Up from the misty border rode
The wild gray horses home,

And woke the wintry mountains
With thunder on the shore,

Bliss Carman.

Out of the night there came a weird
And cried at Yanna's door.

"O Yanna, Adrianna,
They buried me away
In the blue fathoms of the deep,
Beyond the outer bay.

"But in the yule, O Yanna,
Up from the round dim sea,
And reeling dungeons of the fog,
I am come back to thee!"

The wind slept in the forest,
The moon was white and high,
Only the shifting snow awoke
To hear the yule guest cry.

"O Yanna, Yanna, Yanna,
Be quick and let me in!
For bitter is the trackless way
And far that I have been!"

Then Yanna by the yule log
Starts from her dream to hear
A voice that bids her brooding heart
Shudder with joy and fear.

Later Canadian Poems.

The wind is up a moment
And whistles at the eaves,
And in his troubled iron dream
The ocean moans and heaves.

She trembles at the door-lock
That he is come again,
And frees the wooden bolt for one
No barrier could detain.

“ O Garvin, bonny Garvin,
So late, so late you come ! ”
The yule log crumbles down and throws
Strange figures on the gloom ;

But in the moonlight pouring
Through the half-open door
Stands the gray guest of yule and casts
No shadow on the floor.

The change that is upon him
She knows not in her haste ;
About him her strong arms with glad
Impetuous tears are laced.

She's led him to the fireside,
And set the wide oak chair,

Bliss Carman.

And with her warm hands brushed away
The sea-rime from his hair.

“ O Garvin, I have waited,—
Have watched the red sun sink,
And clouds of sail come flocking in
Over the world's gray brink,

“ With stories of encounter
On plank and mast and spar ;
But never the brave barque I launched
And waved across the bar.

“ How come you so unsignalled,
When I have watched so well ?
Where rides the Adrianna
With my name on boat and bell ? ”

“ O Yanna, golden Yanna,
The Adrianna lies
With the sea dredging through her ports,
The white sand through her eyes.

“ And strange unearthly creatures
Make marvel of her hull,
Where far below the gulfs of storm
There is eternal lull.

Later Canadian Poems.

"O Yanna, Adrianna,

 This midnight I am here,
Because one night of all my life
 At yuletide of the year,

"With the stars white in heaven,
 And peace upon the sea,
With all my world in your white arms
 You gave yourself to me.

"For that one night, my Yanna,
 Within the dying year,
Was it not well to love, and now
 Can it be well to fear?"

"O Garvin, there is heartache
 In tales that are half told ;
But ah, thy cheek is pale to-night,
 And thy poor hands are cold !

"Tell me the course, the voyage,
 The ports, and the new stars ;
Did the long rollers make green surf
 On the white reefs and bars?"

"O Yanna, Adrianna,
 Though easily I found

Bliss Carman.

The set of those uncharted tides
In seas no line could sound,

“And made without a pilot
The port without a light,
No log keeps tally of the knots
That I have sailed to-night.

“It fell about mid-April ;
The Trades were holding free ;
We drove her till the scuppers hissed
And buried in the lee.

* * * * *

“O Yanna, Adrianna,
Loose hands and let me go !
The night grows red along the East,
And in the shifting snow

“I hear my shipmates calling,
Sent out to search for me
In the pale lands beneath the moon
Along the troubling sea.”

“O Garvin, bonny Garvin,
What is the booming sound

Later Canadian Poems.

Of canvas, and the piping shrill,
As when a ship comes round ? ”

“ It is the shadow boatswain
Piping his hands to bend
The looming sails on giant yards
Aboard the Nomansfriend.

“ She sails for Sunken Harbor
And ports of yester year ;
The tern are shrilling in the lift,
The low wind-gates are clear.

“ O Yanna, Adrianna,
The little while is done.
Thou wilt behold the brightening sea
Freshen before the sun,

“ And many a morning redden
The dark hill slopes of pine ;
But I must sail hull-down to-night
Below the gray sea-line.

“ I shall not hear the snowbirds
Their morning litany,
For when the dawn comes over dale
I must put out to sea.”

Bliss Carman.

"O Garvin, bonny Garvin,
To have thee as I will,
I would that never more on earth
The dawn came over hill."

* * * * *

Then on the snowy pillow,
Her hair about her face,
He laid her in the quiet room,
And wiped away all trace

Of tears from the poor eyelids
That were so sad for him,
And soothed her into sleep at last
As the great stars grew dim.

Tender as April twilight
He sang, and the song grew
Vague as the dreams which roam about
This world of dust and dew :

"O Yanna, Adrianna,
Dear Love, look forth to sea,
And all year long until the yule,
Dear Heart, keep watch for me !

Later Canadian Poems.

"O Yanna, Adrianna,
I hear the calling sea,
And the folk telling tales among
The hills where I would be.

"O Yanna, Adrianna,
Over the hills of sea
The wind calls and the morning comes,
And I must forth from thee.

"But Yanna, Adrianna,
Keep watch above the sea ;
And when the weary time is o'er,
Dear Life, come back to me !"

"O Garvin, bonny Garvin—"
She murmurs in her dream,
And smiles a moment in her sleep
To hear the white gulls scream.

Then with the storm foreboding
Far in the dim gray South,
He kissed her not upon the cheek
Nor on the burning mouth,

But once above the forehead
Before he turned away ;

Bliss Carman.

And ere the morning light stole in,
That golden lock was gray.

“O Yanna, Adrianna—”

The wind moans to the sea ;
And down the sluices of the dawn
A shadow drifts alee.

Low Tide on Grand-Pré.

The sun goes down, and over all
These barren reaches by the tide
Such unelusive glories fall,
I almost dream they yet will bide
Until the coming of the tide.

And yet I know that not for us,
By any ecstasy of dream,
He lingers to keep luminous
A little while the grievous stream,
Which frets, uncomforted of dream,—

A grievous stream, that to and fro
Athrough the fields of Acadie

Later Canadian Poems.

Goes wandering, as if to know
Why one beloved face should be
So long from home and Acadie !

Was it a year or lives ago
We took the grasses in our hands,
And caught the summer flying low
Over the waving meadow lands,
And held it there between our hands ?

The while the river at our feet—
A drowsy inland meadow stream—
At set of sun the after-heat
Made running gold, and in the gleam
We freed our birch upon the stream.

There down along the elms at dusk
We lifted dripping blade to drift,
Through twilight scented fine like musk,
Where night and gloom awhile uplift,
Nor sunder soul and soul adrift.

And that we took into our hands—
Spirit of life or subtler thing—
Breathed on us there, and loosed the bands
Of death, and taught us, whispering,
The secret of some wonder-thing.

Bliss Carman.

Then all your face grew light, and seemed
To hold the shadow of the sun ;
The evening faltered, and I deemed
That time was ripe, and years had done
Their wheeling underneath the sun.

So all desire and all regret,
And fear and memory, were naught ;
One to remember or forget
The keen delight our hearts had caught ;
Morrow and yesterday were naught !

The night has fallen, and the tide . . .
Now and again comes drifting home,
Across these aching barrens wide,
A sigh like driven wind or foam ;
In grief the flood is bursting home !

Later Canadian Poems.

In Apple Time.

The apple harvest days are here,
The boding apple harvest days,
And down the flaming valley ways
The foresters of time draw near.

Through leagues of bloom I went with Spring,
To call you on the slopes of morn,
Where in imperious song is born
The wild heart of the goldenwing.

I roved through alien summer lands,
I sought your beauty near and far ;
To-day, where russet shadows are,
I hold your face between my hands.

On runnels dark, by slopes of fern,
The hazy undern sleeps in sun ;
Remembrance and desire, undone,
From old regret to dreams return.

The apple harvest time is here,
The tender apple harvest time ;
A sheltering calm, unknown at prime,
Settles upon the brooding year.

Bliss Carman.

Carnations in Winter.

Your carmine flakes of bloom to-night

The fire of wintry sunsets hold ;

Again in dreams you burn to light

A far Canadian garden old.

The blue north summer over it

Is bland with long ethereal days ;

The gleaming martins wheel and flit

Where breaks your sun down orient ways.

There, where the gradual twilight falls,

Through quietudes of dusk afar,

Hermit antiphonal hermit calls

From hills below the first pale star.

Then, in yon passionate love's foredoom,

Once more your spirits stir the air,

And you are lifted through the gloom

To warm the coils of her dark hair !

Later Canadian Poems.

In the Heart of the Hills.

In the warm blue heart of the hills
My beautiful beautiful one
Sleeps where he laid him down
Before the journey was done.

All the long summer day
The ghosts of noon draw nigh,
And the tremulous aspens hear
The footing of winds go by.

Down to the gates of the sea,
Out of the gates of the west,
Journeys the whispering river
Before the place of his rest.

The road he loved to follow
When June came by his door,
Out through the dim blue haze
Leads, but allures no more.

The trailing shadows of clouds
Steal from the slopes and are gone ;
The myriad life in the grass
Stirs, but he slumbers on ;

Bliss Carman.

The inland-wandering tern
 Skriel as they forage and fly ;
His loons on the lonely reach
 Utter their querulous cry ;

Over the floating lilies
 A dragon-fly tacks and steers ;
Far in the depth of the blue
 A martin settles and veers ;

To every roadside thistle
 A gold-brown butterfly clings ;
But he no more companions
 All the dear vagrant things.

The strong red journeying sun,
 The pale and wandering rain,
Will roam on the hills together
 And find him never again.

Then twilight falls with the touch
 Of a hand that soothes and stills,
And a swamp-robin sings into light
 The lone white star of the hills.

Alone in the dusk he sings,
 And a burden of sorrow and wrong

Later Canadian Poems.

Is lifted up from the earth
And carried away in his song.

Alone in the dusk he sings,
And the joy of another day
Is folded in peace and borne
On the drift of years away.

But there in the heart of the hills
My beautiful weary one
Sleeps where he laid him down ;
And the long sweet night is begun.

The Last Watch.

Comrades, comrades, have me buried
Like a warrior of the sea,
With the flag across my breast
And my sword upon my knee.

Steering out from vanished headlands
For a harbor on no chart,
With the winter in the rigging,
With the ice-wind in my heart,

Bliss Carman.

Down the bournless slopes of sea room,
With the long gray wake behind,
I have sailed my cruiser steady
With no pilot but the wind.

Battling with relentless pirates
From the lower seas of Doom,
I have kept the colors flying
Through the roar of drift and gloom.

Scudding where the shadow foemen
Hang about us grim and stark,
Broken spars and shredded canvas,
We are racing for the dark.

Sped and blown abaft the sunset
Like a shriek the storm has caught ;
But the helm is lashed to windward,
And the sails are sheeted taut.

Comrades, comrades, have me buried
Like a warrior of the night.
I can hear the bell-buoy calling
Down below the harbor light.

Steer in shoreward, loose the signal,
The last watch has been cut short ;

Later Canadian Poems.

Speak me kindly to the islesmen,
When we make the foreign port.

We shall make it ere the morning
Rolls the fog from strait and bluff ;
Where the offing crimsons eastward
There is anchorage enough.

How I wander in my dreaming !
Are we northing nearer home,
Or outbound for fresh adventure
On the reeling plains of foam ?

North I think it is, my comrades,
Where one heart-beat counts for ten,
Where the loving hand is loyal,
And the women's sons are men ;

Where the red auroras tremble
When the polar night is still,
Lighting home the worn sea farers
To their haven in the hill.

Comrades, comrades, have me buried
Like a warrior of the North.
Lower me the long-boat, stay me
In your arms, and bear me forth ;

Bliss Carman.

Lay me in the sheets and row me,
 With the tiller in my hand,
Row me in below the beacon
 Where my sea-dogs used to land.

Has your captain lost his cunning
 After leading you so far?
Row me your last league, my sea-kings;
 It is safe within the bar.

Shoulder me and house me hillward,
 Where the field-lark makes his bed,
So the gulls can wheel above me
 All day long when I am dead;

Where the keening wind can find me
 With the April rain for guide,
And come crooning her old stories
 Of the kingdoms of the tide.

Comrades, comrades, have me buried
 Like a warrior of the sun;
I have carried my sealed orders
 Till the last command is done.

Kiss me on the cheek for courage,
 (There is none to greet me home,)

Later Canadian Poems

Then farewell to your old lover
Of the thunder of the foam ;

For the grass is full of slumber
In the twilight world for me,
And my tired hands are slackened
From their toiling on the sea.

Outbound

A lonely sail in the vast sea-room,
I have put out for the port of gloom.

The voyage is far on the trackless tide,
The watch is long, and the seas are wide.

The headlands blue in the sinking day
Kiss me a hand on the outward way.

The fading gulls, as they dip and veer,
Lift me a voice that is good to hear.

The great winds come, and the heaving sea,
The restless mother, is calling me.

Bliss Carman.

The cry of her heart is lone and wild,
Searching the night for her wandered child.

Beautiful, weariless mother of mine,
In the drift of doom I am here, I am thine.

Beyond the fathom of hope or fear,
From bourn to bourn of the dusk I steer,

Swept on in the wake of the stars, in the stream
Of a roving tide, from dream to dream.

Overlord,

πνεῦμα κυρίου 'επ' ἐμέ.

Lord of the grass and hill,

Lord of the rain,

White overlord of will,

Master of pain,

I, who am dust and air,

Blown through the halls of death

Like a pale ghost of prayer,

I am thy breath.

Later Canadian Poems

Lord of the blade and leaf,
Lord of the bloom,
Sheer overlord of grief,
Master of doom,

Lonely as wind or snow,
Through the vague world and dim,
Vagrant and glad I go
I am thy whim.

Lord of the storm and lull,
Lord of the sea,
I am thy broken gull
Blown out alee.

Lord of the harvest dew,
Lord of the dawn,
Star of the paling blue
Darkling and gone,

Lost on the mountain height
Where the first winds are stirred,
Out of the wells of night
I am thy word.

Lord of the haunted hush
Where raptures throng,

Bliss Carman.

I am thy hermit thrush
Ending no song.

Lord of the frost and cold,
Lord of the north,
When the red sun grows old
And day goes forth,

I shall put off this girth—
Go glad and free,
Earth to my mother earth,
Spirit to thee.



ARCHIBALD LAMPMAN.

Archibald Lampman.

Among the Millet.

The dew is gleaming in the grass,
The morning hours are seven,
And I am fain to watch you pass,
Ye soft white clouds of heaven.

Ye stray and gather, part and fold ;
The wind alone can tame you ;
I think of what in time of old
The poets loved to name you.

They called you sheep, the sky your sward,
A field without a reaper ;
They called the shining sun your lord,
The shepherd wind your keeper.

Your sweetest poets I will deem
The men of old for moulding
In simple beauty such a dream,
And I could lie beholding,

Later Canadian Poems.

Where daisies in the meadow toss,
The wind from morn till even
Forever shepherd you across
The shining field of heaven.

April.

Pale season, watcher in unvexed suspense,
Still priestess of the patient middle day,
Betwixt wild March's humoured petulance
And the warm wooing of green-kirtled May,
Maid month of sunny peace and sober grey,
Weaver of flowers in sunward glades that ring
With murmur of libation to the spring :

As memory of pain, all past, is peace,
And joy, dream-tasted, hath the deepest cheer,
So art thou sweetest of all months that lease
The twelve short spaces of the flying year.
The bloomless days are dead, and frozen fear
No more for many moons shall vex the earth,
Dreaming of summer and fruit-laden mirth.

Archibald Lampman.

The grey song-sparrows, full of spring, have sung
 Their clear thin silvery tunes in leafless trees ;
The robin hops and whistles, and among
 The silver-tasselled poplars the brown bees
 Murmur faint dreams of summer harvestries ;
The creamy sun at even scatters down
A gold-green mist across the murmuring town.

By the slow streams the frogs all day and night
 Dream without thought of pain or heed of ill,
Watching the long warm silent hours take flight,
 And ever with soft throats that pulse and thrill,
 From the pale-weeded shallows trill and trill,
Tremulous sweet voices, flute-like, answering
One to another glorying in the spring.

All day across the ever-cloven soil
 Strong horses labour, steaming in the sun,
Down the long furrows with slow straining toil,
 Turning the brown clean layers ; and one by one
 The crows gloom over them, till daylight done
Finds them asleep somewhere in duskèd lines
Beyond the wheat-lands in the northern pines.

The old year's cloaking of brown leaves that bind
 The forest floor-ways, plated close and true—
The last love's labour of the autumn wind—

Later Canadian Poems.

Is broken with curled flower buds, white and blue,
In all the matted hollows, and speared through
With thousand serpent-spotted blades upsprung,
Yet bloomless, of the slender adder-tongue.

In the warm noon the south wind creeps and cools,
Where the red-budded stems of maples throw
Still tangled etchings on the amber pools,
Quite silent now, forgetful of the slow
Drip of the taps, the troughs, and trampled snow,
The keen March mornings, and the silvering rime,
And mirthful labour of the sugar prime.

Ah, I have wandered with unwearied feet
All the long sweetness of an April day,
Lulled with cool murmurs and the drowsy beat
Of partridge wings in secret thickets grey,
The marriage hymns of all the birds at play,
The faces of sweet flowers, and easeful dreams
Beside slow reaches of frog-haunted streams ;

Wandered with happy feet, and quite forgot
The shallow toil, the strife against the grain,
Near souls that hear us call, but answer not,—
The loneliness, perplexity and pain,
And high thoughts cankered with an earthly stain ;

Archibald Lampman.

And then, the long draught emptied to the lees,
I turn me homeward in slow-pacing ease,

Cleaving the cedar shadows and the thin
Mist of grey gnats that cloud the river shore,
Sweet even choruses, that dance and spin
Soft tangles in the sunset ; and once more
The city smites me with its dissonant roar.
To its hot heart I pass, untroubled yet,
Fed with calm hope, without desire or fret.

So to the year's first altar step I bring
Gifts of meek song, and make my spirit free
With the blind working of unanxious spring,
Careless with her, whether the days that flee
Pale drouth or golden-fruited plenty see,
So that we toil, brothers, without distress,
In calm-eyed peace and godlike blamelessness.

Heat

From plains that reel to southward, dim,
The road runs by me white and bare ;
Up the steep hill it seems to swim
Beyond, and melt into the glare.

Later Canadian Poems.

Upward half way, or it may be
Nearer the summit, slowly steals
A hay-cart, moving dustily
With idly clacking wheels.

By his cart's side the wagoner
Is slouching slowly at his ease,
Half-hidden in the windless blur
Of white dust puffing to his knees.
This wagon on the height above,
From sky to sky on either hand,
Is the sole thing that seems to move
In all the heat-held land.

Beyond me in the fields the sun
Soaks in the grass and hath his will ;
I count the marguerites one by one ;
Even the buttercups are still.
On the brook yonder not a breath
Disturbs the spider or the midge.
The water-bugs draw close beneath
The cool gloom of the bridge.

Where the far elm-tree shadows flood
Dark patches in the burning grass,
The cows, each with her peaceful cud,
Lie waiting for the heat to pass.

Archibald Lampman.

From somewhere on the slope near by
 Into the pale depth of the noon
A wandering thrush slides leisurely
 His thin revolving tune.

In intervals of dreams I hear
 The cricket from the drougthy ground ;
The grasshoppers spin into mine ear
 A small innumerable sound.
I lift mine eyes sometimes to gaze :
 The burning sky-line blinds my sight :
The woods far off are blue with haze :
 The hills are drenched in light.

And yet to me not this or that
 Is always sharp or always sweet ;
In the sloped shadow of my hat
 I lean at rest, and drain the heat ;
Nay more, I think some blessed power
 Hath brought me wandering idly here :
In the full furnace of this hour
 My thoughts grow keen and clear.

Later Canadian Poems.

Freedom.

Out of the heart of the city begotten
Of the labour of men and their manifold hands,
Whose souls, that were sprung from the earth in her morning,
No longer regard or remember her warning,
Whose hearts in the furnace of care have forgotten
Forever the scent and the hue of her lands ;

Out of the heat of the usurer's hold,
From the horrible crash of the strong man's feet ;
Out of the shadow where pity is dying ;
Out of the clamour where beauty is lying,
Dead in the depth of the struggle for gold ;
Out of the din and the glare of the street ;

Into the arms of our mother we come,
Our broad strong mother, the innocent earth,
Mother of all things beautiful, blameless,
Mother of hopes that her strength makes tameless,
Where the voices of grief and of battle are dumb,
And the whole world laughs in the light of her mirth.

Over the fields, where the cool winds sweep,
Black with the mould and brown with the loam,

Archibald Lampman.

Where the thin green spears of the wheat are appearing,
And the high-ho shouts from the smoky clearing ;

Over the widths where the cloud shadows creep ;
Over the fields and the fallows we come ;

Over the swamps with their pensive noises,
Where the burnished cup of the marigold gleams ;
Skirting the reeds, where the quick winds shiver
On the swelling breast of the dimpled river,
And the blue of the kingfisher hangs and poises,
Watching a spot by the edge of the streams ;

By the miles of the fences warped and dyed
With the white-hot noons and their withering fires,
Where the rough bees trample the creamy bosoms
Of the hanging tufts of the elder blossoms,
And the spiders weave, and the grey snakes hide,
In the crannied gloom of the stones and the briers ;

Over the meadow lands sprouting with thistle,
Where the humming wings of the blackbirds pass,
Where the hollows are banked with the violets flowering,
And the long-limbed pendulous elms are towering,
Where the robins are loud with their voluble whistle,
And the ground sparrow scurries away through the grass,

Where the restless bobolink loiters and woos
Down in the hollows and over the swells,

Later Canadian Poems.

Dropping in and out of the shadows,
Sprinkling his music about the meadows,
Whistles and little checks and coos,
And the tinkle of glassy bells ;

Into the dim woods full of the tombs
Of the dead trees soft in their sepulchres,
Where the pensive throats of the shy birds hidden
Pipe to us strangely entering unbidden,
And tenderly still in the tremulous glooms
The trilliums scatter their white-winged stars ;

Up to the hills where our tired hearts rest,
Loosen, and halt, and regather their dreams ;
Up to the hills, where the winds restore us,
Clearing our eyes to the beauty before us,
Earth with the glory of life on her breast,
Earth with the gleam of her cities and streams. —

Here we shall commune with her and no other ;
Care and the battle of life shall cease ;
Men her degenerate children behind us,
Only the might of her beauty shall bind us,
Full of rest, as we gaze on the face of our mother,
Earth in the health and the strength of her peace.

Archibald Lampman.

Midnight.

From where I sit I see the stars,
And down the chilly floor
The moon between the frozen bars
Is glimmering dim and hoar.

Without, in many a peaked mound
The glinting snowdrifts lie ;
There is no voice or living sound ;
The embers slowly die.

Yet some wild thing is in mine ear ;
I hold my breath and hark ;
Out of the depth I seem to hear
A crying in the dark :

No sound of man or wife or child,
No sound of beast that groans,
Or of the wind that whistles wild,
Or of the tree that moans :

I know not what it is I hear ;
I bend my head and hark :
I cannot drive it from mine ear,
That crying in the dark.

Later Canadian Poems.

Unrest.

All day upon the garden bright
The sun shines strong,
But in my heart there is no light,
Nor any song.

Voices of merry life go by,
Adown the street ;
But I am weary of the cry
And drift of feet.

With all dear things that ought to please
The hours are bless'd,
And yet my soul is ill at ease,
And cannot rest.

Strange spirit, leave me not too long,
Nor stint to give,
For if my soul have no sweet song,
It cannot live.

Archibald Lampman.

A Song.

Oh night and sleep,
Ye are so soft and deep,
I am so weary, come ye soon to me.
Oh hours that creep,
With so much time to weep,
I am so tired, can ye no swifter be?

Come, night, anear ;
I'll whisper in thine ear
What makes me so unhappy, full of care ;
Dear night, I die
For love that all men buy
With tears, and know not it is dark despair.

Dear night, I pray,
How is it that men say
That love is sweet ? It is not sweet to me.
For one boy's sake
A poor girl's heart must break ;
So sweet, so true, and yet it could not be !

Oh, I loved well,
Such love as none can tell :
It was so true, it could not make him know :

Later Canadian Poems.

For he was blind,
All light and all unkind :
Oh, had he known, would he have hurt me so ?

Oh night and sleep,
Ye are so soft and deep,
I am so weary, come ye soon to me.
Oh hours that creep,
With so much time to weep,
I am so tired, can ye no swifter be ?

What Do Poets Want With Gold?

What do poets want with gold,
Cringing slaves and cushioned ease ;
Are not crusts and garments old
Better for their souls than these ?

Gold is but the juggling rod
Of a false usurping god,
Graven long ago in hell
With a sombre stony spell,
Working in the world forever.
Hate is not so strong to sever

Archibald Lampman.

Beating human heart from heart.
Soul from soul we shrink and part,
And no longer hail each other
With the ancient name of brother.
Give the simple poet gold,
And his song will die of cold.
He must walk with men that reel
On the rugged path, and feel
Every sacred soul that is
Beating very near to his.
Simple, human, careless, free,
As God made him, he must be :
For the sweetest song of bird
Is the hidden tenor heard
In the dusk, at even-flush,
From the forest's inner hush,
Of the simple hermit thrush.

What do poets want with love?
Flowers that shiver out of hand,
And the fervid fruits that prove
Only bitter broken sand ?

Poets speak of passions best
When their dreams are undistressed ;
And the sweetest songs are sung,
E'er the inner heart is stung.

Later Canadian Poems.

Let them dream ; 'tis better so ;
Ever dream, but never know.
If their spirits once have drained
All that goblet crimson-stained,
Finding what they dream divine,
Only earthly, sluggish wine,
Sooner will the warm lips pale,
And the flawless voices fail,
Sooner come the drooping wing,
And the afterdays that bring
No such songs as did the spring.

The Organist.

In his dim chapel day by day
The organist was wont to play,
And please himself with fluted reveries ;
And all the spirit's joy and strife,
The longing of a tender life,
Took sound and form upon the ivory keys ;
And though he seldom spoke a word,
The simple hearts that loved him heard
His glowing soul in these.

Archibald Lampman.

One day as he was wrapped, a sound
Of feet stole near ; he turned and found
A little maid that stood beside him there.
She started, and in shrinking wise
Besought him with her liquid eyes
And little features, very sweet and spare.
“ You love the music, child,” he said,
And laid his hand upon her head,
And smoothed her matted hair.

She answered, “ At the door one day
I sat and heard the organ play ;
I did not dare to come inside for fear ;
But yesterday, a little while,
I crept half up the empty aisle
And heard the music sounding sweet and clear ;
To-day I thought you would not mind,
For, master dear, your face was kind,
And so I came up here.”

“ You love the music, then,” he said,
And still he stroked her golden head,
And followed out some winding reverie ;
“ And you are poor ? ” said he at last ;
The maiden nodded, and he passed
His hand across his forehead dreamingly ;

Later Canadian Poems.

"And will you be my friend?" he spake,
"And on the organ learn to make
Grand music here with me?"

And all the little maiden's face
Was kindled with a grateful grace ;
"Oh, master, teach me ; I will slave for thee !"
She cried ; and so the child grew dear
To him, and slowly, year by year,
He taught her all the organ's majesty ;
And gave her from his slender store
Bread and warm clothing, that no more
Her cheeks were pinched to see.

And year by year the maiden grew
Taller and lovelier, and the hue
Deepened upon her tender cheeks untried.
Rounder, and queenlier, and more fair
Her form grew, and her golden hair
Fell yearly richer at the master's side.
In speech and bearing, form and face,
Sweeter and graver, grace by grace,
Her beauties multiplied.

And sometimes at his work a glow
Would touch him, and he murmured low,
"How beautiful she is !" and bent his head ;

Archibald Lampman.

And sometimes when the day went by
And brought no maiden, he would sigh,
And lean and listen for her velvet tread ;
And he would drop his hands and say,
“ My music cometh not to-day ;
Pray God she be not dead ! ”

So the sweet maiden filled his heart,
And with her growing grew his art,
For day by day more wondrously he played.
Such heavenly things the master wrought,
That in his happy dreams he thought
The organ's self did love the gold-haired maid :
But she, the maiden, never guessed
What prayers for her in hours of rest
The sombre organ prayed.

At last, one summer morning fair,
The maiden came with braided hair
And took his hands, and held them eagerly.
“ To-morrow is my wedding day ;
Dear master, bless me that the way
Of life be smooth, not bitter, unto me.”
He stirred not ; but the light did go
Out of his shrunken cheeks, and oh !
His head hung heavily.

Later Canadian Poems.

“ You love him, then ? ” “ I love him well , ”
She answered, and a numbness fell
Upon his eyes and all his heart that bled.
A glory, half a smile, abode
Within the maiden’s eyes and glowed
Upon her parted lips. The master said,
“ God bless and bless thee, little maid,
With peace and long delight,” and laid
His hands upon her head.

And she was gone ; and all that day
The hours crept up and slipped away,
And he sat still, as moveless as a stone.
The night came down, with quiet stars,
And darkened him. In colored bars
Along the shadowy aisle the moonlight shone.
And then the master woke and passed
His hands across the keys at last,
And made the organ moan.

The organ shook, the music wept ;
For sometimes like a wail it crept
In broken moanings down the shadows drear ;
And otherwhiles the sound did swell,
And like a sudden tempest fell
Through all the windows wonderful and clear.

Archibald Lampman.

The people gathered from the street,
And filled the chapel seat by seat—
They could not choose but hear.

And there they sat till dawning light,
Nor ever stirred for awe. “To-night
The master hath a noble mood,” they said.
But on a sudden ceased the sound :
Like ghosts the people gathered round,
And on the keys they found his fallen head.
The silent organ had received
The master’s broken heart relieved,
And he was white and dead.

Later Canadian Poems.

The Truth.

Friend, though thy soul should burn thee, yet be still.

Thoughts were not made for strife, nor tongues for swords.

He that sees clear is gentlest of his words,

And that's not truth that hath the heart to kill.

The whole world's thought shall not one truth fulfil.

Dull in our age, and passionate in youth,

No mind of man hath found the perfect truth,

Nor shalt thou find it ; therefore, friend, be still.

Watch and be still, nor hearken to the fool,

The babbler of consistency and rule :

Wisest is he, who, never quite secure,

Changes his thoughts for better day by day :

To-morrow some new light will shine, be sure,

And thou shalt see thy thought another way.

Archibald Lampman.

A Prayer.

Oh earth, oh dewy mother, breathe on us
 Something of all thy beauty and thy might,
 Us that are part of day, but most of night,
Not strong like thee, but ever burdened thus
With glooms and cares, things pale and dolorous,
 Whose gladdest moments are not wholly bright ;
 Something of all thy freshness and thy light,
Oh earth, oh mighty mother, breathe on us.

Oh mother, who wast long before our day,
 And after us full many an age shalt be,
Careworn and blind, we wander from thy way :
 Born of thy strength, yet weak and halt are we ;
Grant us, oh mother, therefore, us who pray,
 Some little of thy light and majesty.

Later Canadian Poems.

Knowledge.

What is more large than knowledge and more sweet ;
 Knowledge of thoughts and deeds, of rights and wrongs,
 Of passions, and of beauties, and of songs ;
Knowledge of life ; to feel its great heart beat
Through all the soul upon her crystal seat ;
 To see, to feel, and evermore to know ;
 To till the old world's wisdom till it grow
A garden for the wandering of our feet.

Oh for a life of leisure and broad hours,
 To think and dream, to put away small things,
 This world's perpetual leaguer of dull naughts ;
To wander like the bee among the flowers
 Till old age find us weary, feet and wings
 Grown heavy with the gold of many thoughts.

Archibald Lampman.

Sight.

The world is bright with beauty, and its days
Are filled with music ; could we only know
True ends from false, and lofty things from low ;
Could we but tear away the walls that graze
Our very elbows in life's frosty ways ;
Behold the width beyond us with its flow,
Its knowledge and its murmur and its glow,
Where doubt itself is but a golden haze.

Ah brothers, still upon our pathway lies
The shadow of dim weariness and fear,
Yet if we could but lift our earthward eyes
To see, and open our dull ears to hear,
Then should the wonder of this world draw near
And life's innumerable harmonies.

Later Canadian Poems.

Music.

Move on, light hands, so strongly tenderly,
Now with dropped calm and yearning undersong,
Now swift and loud, tumultuously strong,
And I in darkness, sitting near to thee,
Shall only hear, and feel, but shall not see,
One hour made passionately bright with dreams,
Keen glimpses of life's splendour, dashing gleams
Of what we would, and what we cannot be.

Surely not painful ever, yet not glad,
Shall such hours be to me, but blindly sweet,
Sharp with all yearning and all fact at strife,
Dreams that shine by with unremembered feet,
And tones that like far distance make this life
Spectral and wonderful and strangely sad.

Archibald Lampman.

The Railway Station.

The darkness brings no quiet here, the light
No waking : ever on my blinded brain
The flare of lights, the rush, and cry, and strain,
The engine's scream, the hiss and thunder smite :
I see the hurrying crowds, the clasp, the flight,
Faces that touch, eyes that are dim with pain :
I see the hoarse wheels turn, and the great train
Move labouring out into the bourneless night.

So many souls within its dim recesses,
So many bright, so many mournful eyes :
Mine eyes that watch grow fixed with dreams and guesses ;
What threads of life, what hidden histories,
What sweet or passionate dreams and dark distresses,
What unknown thoughts, what various agonies !

Later Canadian Poems.

Outlook.

Not to be conquered by these headlong days,
But to stand free : to keep the mind at brood
On life's deep meaning, nature's altitude
Of loveliness, and time's mysterious ways ;
At every thought and deed to clear the haze
Out of our eyes, considering only this,
What man, what life, what love, what beauty is,
This is to live, and win the final praise.

Though strife, ill fortune, and harsh human need
Beat down the soul, at moments blind and dumb
With agony ; yet, patience—there shall come
Many great voices from life's outer sea,
Hours of strange triumph, and, when few men heed,
Murmurs and glimpses of eternity.



CHARLES G. D. ROBERTS.

Charles G. D. Roberts.

Canada.

O Child of Nations, giant-limbed,
Who stand'st among the nations now,
Unheeded, unadored, unhymned,
With unanointed brow,—

How long the ignoble sloth, how long
The trust in greatness not thine own?
Surely the lion's brood is strong
To front the world alone!

How long the indolence, ere thou dare
Achieve thy destiny, seize thy fame—
Ere our proud eyes behold thee bear
A nation's franchise, nation's name?

The Saxon force, the Celtic fire,
These are thy manhood's heritage!
Why rest with babes and slaves? Seek higher
The place of race and age.

Later Canadian Poems.

I see to every wind unfurled
The flag that bears the Maple-Wreath ;
Thy swift keels furrow round the world
Its blood-red folds beneath ;

Thy swift keels cleave the furthest seas ;
Thy white sails swell with alien gales ;
To stream on each remotest breeze
The black smoke of thy pipes exhales.

O Falterer, let thy past convince
Thy future,—all the growth, the gain,
The fame since Cartier knew thee, since
Thy shores beheld Champlain !

Montcalm and Wolfe ! Wolfe and Montcalm !
Quebec, thy storied citadel
Attest in burning song and psalm
How here thy heroes fell !

O Thou that bor'st the battle's brunt
At Queenston, and at Lundy's Lane,—
On whose scant ranks but iron front
The battle broke in vain !—

Whose was the danger, whose the day,
From whose triumphant throats the cheers,

Charles G. D. Roberts.

At Chrysler's Farm, at Chateauguay,
Storming like clarion-bursts our ears ?

On soft Pacific slopes,—beside
Strange floods that northward rave and fall,—
Where chafes Acadia's chainless tide—
Thy sons await thy call.

They wait ; but some in exile, some
With strangers housed, in stranger lands ;—
And some Canadian lips are dumb
Beneath Egyptian sands.

O mystic Nile ! Thy secret yields
Before us ; thy most ancient dreams
Are mixed with far Canadian fields
And murmur of Canadian streams.

But thou, my Country, dream not thou !
Wake, and behold how night is done,—
How on thy breast, and o'er thy brow,
Bursts the uprising sun !

Later Canadian Poems.

In the Afternoon.

Wind of the summer afternoon,
Hush, for my heart is out of tune!

Hush, for thou movest restlessly
The too light sleeper, Memory!

Whate'er thou hast to tell me, yet
'Twere something sweeter to forget,—

Sweeter than all thy breath of balm
An hour of unremembering calm!

Blowing over the roofs, and down
The bright streets of this inland town,

These busy crowds, these rocking trees—
What strange note hast thou caught from these?

A note of waves and rushing tides,
Where past the dikes the red flood glides,

To brim the shining channels far
Up the green plains of Tantramar.

Once more I snuff the salt, I stand
On the long dikes of Westmoreland;

Charles G. D. Roberts.

I watch the narrowing flats, the strip
Of red clay at the water's lip ;

Far off the net-reels, brown and high,
And boat-masts slim against the sky ;

Along the ridges of the dikes
Wind-beaten scant sea-grass, and spikes

Of last year's mullein ; down the slopes
To landward, in the sun, thick ropes

Of blue vetch, and convolvulus,
And matted roses glorious.

The liberal blooms o'erbrim my hands ;
I walk the level, wide marsh-lands ;

Waist-deep in dusty-blossomed grass
I watch the swooping breezes pass

In sudden, long, pale lines, that flee
Up the deep breast of this green sea.

I listen to the bird that stirs
The purple tops, and grasshoppers

Whose summer din, before my feet
Subsiding, wakes on my retreat.

Later Canadian Poems.

Again the droning bees hum by ;
Still-winged, the gray hawk wheels on high ;

I drink again the wild perfumes,
And roll, and crush the grassy blooms.

Blown back to olden days, I fain
Would quaff the olden joys again ;

But all the olden sweetness not
The old unmindful peace hath brought.

Wind of this summer afternoon,
Thou hast recalled my childhood's June ;

My heart—still is it satisfied
By all the golden summer-tide ?

Hast thou one eager yearning filled,
Or any restless throbbing stilled,

Or hast thou any power to bear
Even a little of my care ?—

Ever so little of this weight
Of weariness canst thou abate ?

Ah, poor thy gift indeed, unless
Thou bring the old child-heartedness,—

Charles G. D. Roberts.

And such a gift to bring is given,
Alas, to no wind under heaven !

Wind of the summer afternoon,
Be still ; my heart is not in tune.

Sweet is thy voice. ; but yet, but yet—
Of all 'twere sweetest to forget !

On the Creek.

Dear Heart, the noisy strife
And bitter carpings cease.
Here is the lap of life,
Here are the lips of peace.

Afar from stir of streets,
The city's dust and din,
What healing silence meets
And greets us gliding in !

Our light birch silent floats ;
Soundless the paddle dips.
Yon sunbeam thick with motes
Athro' the leafage slips,

Later Canadian Poems.

To light the iris wings
Of dragon-flies alit
On lily-leaves, and things
Of gauze that float and flit.

Above the water's brink
Hush'd winds make summer riot ;
Our thirsty spirits drink
Deep, deep, the summer quiet.

We slip the world's gray husk,
Emerge, and spread new plumes ;
In sunbeam-fretted dusk,
Thro' populous golden glooms,

Like thistledown we slide,
Two disembodied dreams,—
With spirits alert, wide-eyed,
Explore the perfume-streams.

For scents of various grass
Stream down the veering breeze ;
Warm puffs of honey pass
From flowering linden-trees ;

And fragrant gusts of gum,
From clammy balm-tree buds,

Charles G. D. Roberts.

With fern-brake odors, come
From intricate solitudes.

The elm-tops are astir
With flirt of idle wings.
Hark to the grackles' chirr
Whene'er an elm-bough swings !

From off yon ash-limb sere
Out-thrust amid green branches,
Keen like an azure spear
A kingfisher down launches.

Far up the creek his calls
And lessening laugh retreat ;
Again the silence falls,
And soft the green hours fleet.

They fleet with drowsy hum
Of insects on the wing ;—
We sigh—the end must come !
We taste our pleasure's sting.

No more, then, need we try
The rapture to regain.
We feel our day slip by,
And cling to it in vain.

Later Canadian Poems.

But, Dear, keep thou in mind
These moments swift and sweet !
Their memory thou shalt find
 Illumine the common street ;

And thro' the dust and din,
Smiling, thy heart shall hear
Quiet waters lapsing thin,
And locusts shrilling clear.

The Silver Thaw.

There came a day of showers
Upon the shrinking snow ;
The south wind sighed of flowers,
The softening skies hung low.
Midwinter for a space
Foreshadowing April's face,
The white world caught the fancy
And would not let it go.

Charles G. D. Roberts.

In reawakened courses
The brooks rejoiced the land ;
We dreamed the spring's shy forces
Were gathering close at hand.
The dripping buds were stirred,
As if the sap had heard
The long-desired persuasion
Of April's soft command.

But antic Time had cheated
With hope's elusive gleam ;
The phantom spring defeated
Fled down the ways of dream.
And in the night the reign
Of winter came again,
With frost upon the forest
And stillness on the stream.

When morn in rose and crocus
Came up the bitter sky,
Celestial beams awoke us
To wondering ecstasy.
The wizard winter's spell
Had wrought so passing well
That earth was bathed in glory
As if God's smile were nigh.

Later Canadian Poems.

The silvered saplings bending
 Flashed in a rain of gems ;
The statelier trees attending
 Blazed in their diadems.
White fire and amethyst
All common things had kissed,
And chrysolites and sapphires
 Adorned the bramble stems.

In crystalline confusion
 All beauty came to birth ;
It was a kind illusion
 To comfort waiting earth—
To bid the buds forget
The spring so distant yet,
And hearts no more remember
 The iron season's dearth.

Canadian Streams.

O rivers rolling to the sea
From lands that bear the maple tree,
 How swell your voices with the strain
Of loyalty and liberty !

Charles G. D. Roberts.

A holy music, heard in vain
By coward heart and sordid brain,
To whom this strenuous being seems
Naught but a greedy race for gain.

O unsung streams,—not splendid themes
Ye lack to fire your patriot dreams !
Annals of glory gild your waves,
Hope freights your tides, Canadian streams !

St. Lawrence, whose wide water laves
The shores that ne'er have nourished slaves !
Swift Richelieu of liliated fame !
Niagara of glorious graves !

Thy rapids, Ottawa, proclaim
Where Daulac and his heroes came !
Thy tides, St. John, declare La Tour,
And, later, many a loyal name !

Thou inland stream, whose vales, secure
From storm, Tecumseh's death made poor !
And thou small water, red with war,
'Twixt Beaubassin and Beauséjour !

Dread Saguenay, where eagles soar,
What voice shall from the bastioned shore

Later Canadian Poems.

The tale of Roberval reveal
Or his mysterious fate deplore ?

Annapolis, do thy floods yet feel
Faint memories of Champlain's keel,
Thy pulses yet the deeds repeat
Of Poutrincourt and d'Iberville ?

And thou far tide, whose plains now beat
With march of myriad westering feet,
Saskatchewan, whose virgin sod
So late Canadian blood made sweet !

Your bulwark hills, your valleys broad,
Streams where de Salaberry trod,
Where Wolfe achieved, where Brock was slain,—
Their voices are the voice of God !

O sacred waters, not in vain,
Across Canadian height and plain,
Ye sound us in triumphant tone
The summons of your high refrain.

Charles G. D. Roberts.

A Blue Blossom.

A small blue flower with yellow eye
Hath mightier spell to move my soul
Than even the mightiest notes which roll
From man's most perfect minstrelsy.
A flash, a momentary gleam,
A glimpse of some celestial dream,
And tears alone are left to me.

Filled with a longing vague and dim,
I hold the flower in every light ;
To purge my soul's redarkened sight,
I grope till all my senses swim.
In vain ; I feel the ecstasy
Only when suddenly I see
This pale star with the sapphire rim.

Nor hath the blossom such strange power
Because it saith " Forget me not "
For some heart-holden, distant spot,
Or silent tongue, or buried hour.
Methinks immortal memories
Of some past scenes of Paradise
Speak to my spirit through the flower.

Later Canadian Poems.

Forgotten is our ancient tongue ;
Too dull our ears, our eyes too blind,
Even quite to catch its notes, or find
Its symbols written bright among
All shapes of beauty. But 'tis hard,
When one *can* hear, to be debarred
From knowledge of the meaning sung.

Autochthon.

I.

I am the spirit astir
To swell the grain,
When fruitful suns confer
With laboring rain ;
I am the life that thrills
In branch and bloom ;
I am the patience of abiding hills,
The promise masked in doom.

Charles G. D. Roberts.

II.

When the sombre lands are wrung,
And storms are out,
And giant woods give tongue,
I am the shout ;
And when the earth would sleep,
Wrapped in her snows,
I am the infinite gleam of eyes that keep
The post of her repose.

III.

I am the hush of calm,
I am the speed,
The flood-tide's triumphing psalm,
The marsh-pool's heed ;
I work in the rocking roar
Where cataracts fall ;
I flash in the prisms fire that dances o'er
The dew's ephemeral ball.

IV.

I am the voice of wind
And wave and tree,
Of stern desires and blind,
Of strength to be ;

Later Canadian Poems.

I am the cry by night
At point of dawn,
The summoning bugle from the unseen height,
In cloud and doubt withdrawn.

V.

I am the strife that shapes
The stature of man,
The pang no hero escapes,
The blessing, the ban ;
I am the hammer that moulds
The iron of our race,
The omen of God in our blood that a people beholds,
The foreknowledge veiled in our face.

Charles G. D. Roberts.

Song.

Oh, purple hang the pods
On the green locust tree,
And yellow turn the sods
On a grave that's dear to me ;

And blue, softly blue,
The hollow Autumn sky,
With its birds flying through
To where the sun-lands lie !

In the sun-lands they'll bide
While Winter's on the tree ;—
And oh, that I might hide
The grave that's dear to me !

Later Canadian Poems.

Epitaph for a Sailor Buried Ashore.

He who but yesterday would roam
Careless as clouds and currents range,
In homeless wandering most at home,
Inhabiter of change ;

Who wooed the west to win the east,
And named the stars of North and South,
And felt the zest of Freedom's feast
Familiar in his mouth ;

Who found a faith in stranger speech,
And fellowship in foreign hands,
And had within his eager reach
The relish of all lands—

How circumscribed a plot of earth
Keeps now his restless footsteps still,
Whose wish was wide as ocean's girth,
Whose will the water's will !

Charles G. D. Roberts.

Gray Rocks and Grayer Sea.

Gray rocks, and grayer sea,
And surf along the shore—
And in my heart a name
My lips shall speak no more.

The high and lonely hills
Endure the darkening year—
And in my heart endure
A memory and a tear.

Across the tide a sail
That tosses and is gone—
And in my heart the kiss
That longing dreams upon.

Gray rocks, and grayer sea,
And surf along the shore—
And in my heart the face
That I shall see no more.

Later Canadian Poems.

A Song of Growth.

In the heart of a man
Is a thought upfurled :
Reached its full span
It will shake the world,—
And to one high thought
Is a whole race wrought.

Not with vain noise
The great work grows,
Nor with foolish voice,—
But in repose ;
Not in the rush,
But in the hush !

From the cogent lash
Of the cloud-herd wind
The low clouds dash,
Blown headlong, blind ;
But beyond, the great blue
Looks moveless through.

O'er the loud world sweep
The scourge and the rod :
But in deep beyond deep
Is the stillness of God,—
At the fountains of Life
No cry, no strife !

Charles G. D. Roberts.

The Clearing.

Stumps, and harsh rocks, and prostrate trunks all charred,
And gnarled roots naked to the sun and rain,—
They seem in their grim stillness to complain,
And by their plaint the evening peace is jarred.
These ragged acres fire and the ax have scarred,
And many summers not assuaged their pain.
In vain the pink and saffron light, in vain
The pale dew on the hillocks stripped and marred.

But here and there the waste is touched with cheer
Where spreads the fire-weed like a crimson flood,
And venturous plumes of golden-rod appear ;
And round the blackened fence the great boughs lean
With comfort ; and across the solitude
The hermit's holy transport peals serene.

Later Canadian Poems.

The Sower.

A brown sad-colored hillside, where the soil,
Fresh from the frequent harrow, deep and fine,
Lies bare ; no break in the remote sky-line,
Save where a flock of pigeons streams aloft,
Startled from feed in some low-lying croft,
Or far-off spires with yellow of sunset shine ;
And here the Sower, unwittingly divine,
Exerts the silent forethought of his toil.

Alone he treads the glebe, his measured stride
Dumb in the yielding soil ; and tho' small joy
Dwell in his heavy face, as spreads the blind
Pale grain from his dispensing palm aside,
This plodding churl grows great in his employ ;—
Godlike, he makes provision for mankind.

Charles G. D. Roberts.

The Waking Earth.

With shy, bright clamor the live brooks sparkle and run ;
Freed flocks confer about the farmstead ways ;
The air's a wine of dreams and shining haze
Beaded with bird-notes thin—for spring's begun.
The sap flies upward. Death is over and done.
The glad earth wakes ; the glad light breaks, the days
Grow round, grow radiant. Praise for the new life ! Praise
For bliss of breath and blood beneath the sun !

What potent wizardry the wise earth wields,
To conjure with a perfume ! From bare fields
The sense drinks in a breath of furrow and sod,
And lo ! the bound of days and distance yields ;
And fetterless the soul is flown abroad,
Lord of desire and beauty like a god.

Later Canadian Poems.

When Milking Time is Done.

When milking time is done, and over all
This quiet Canadian inland forest home
And wide, rough pasture-lots the shadows come,
And dews, with peace and twilight voices, fall,
From moss-cool watering trough to foddered stall
The tired plough-horses turn,—the barn-yard loam
Soft to their feet,—and in the sky's pale dome
Like resonant chords the swooping night-jars call ;

The frogs, cool-fluting ministers of dream,
Make shrill the slow brook's borders ; pasture bars
Down clatter, and the cattle wander through,—
Vague shapes amid the thickets ; gleam by gleam
Above the wet grey woods emerge the stars,
And through the dusk the farmstead fades from view.

Charles G. D. Roberts.

In the Wide Awe and Wisdom of the Night.

In the wide awe and wisdom of the night
I saw the round world rolling on its way,
Beyond significance of depth or height,
Beyond the interchange of dark and day.
I marked the march to which is set no pause,
And that stupendous orbit round whose rim
The great sphere sweeps, obedient unto laws
That utter the eternal thought of Him.

I compassed time, outstripped the starry speed,
And in my still soul apprehended space,
Till, weighing laws which these but blindly heed,
At last I came before Him face to face ;
And knew the universe of no such span
As the august infinitude of Man.

Later Canadian Poems.

The Night Sky.

O Deep of Heaven, 'tis thou alone art boundless,
 'Tis thou alone our balance shall not weigh,
'Tis thou alone our fathom-line finds soundless,
 Whose infinite our finite must obey!
Thro' thy blue realms and down thy starry reaches
 Thought voyages forth beyond thy furthest fire,
And homing from no sighted shoreline, teaches
 Thee measureless as is the soul's desire.
O Deep of Heaven! No beam of Pleiad ranging
 Eternity may bridge thy gulf of spheres;
The ceaseless hum that fills thy sleep unchanging
 Is rain of the innumerable years;
Our worlds, our suns, our ages,—these but stream
Through thine abiding like a dateless dream!



DUNCAN CAMPBELL SCOTT.

Duncan Campbell Scott.

Above St. Irénée.

I rested on the breezy height,
In cooler shade and clearer air,
Beneath a maple tree ;
Below, the mighty river took
Its sparkling shade and sheeny light
Down to the sombre sea,
And clustered by the leaping brook,
The roofs of white St. Irénée.

The sapphire hills on either hand
Broke down upon the silver tide,
The river ran in streams,
In streams of mingled azure-grey
With here a broken purple band,
And whorls of drab, and beams
Of shattered silver light astray,
Where far away the south shore gleams.

Later Canadian Poems.

I walked a mile along the height
Between the flowers upon the road,
Asters and golden-rod ;
And in the gardens pinks and stocks,
And gaudy poppies shaking light,
And daisies blooming near the sod,
And lowly pansies set in flocks
With purple monkshood overawed.

And there I saw a little child
Between the tossing golden-rod,
Coming along to me ;
She was a tender little thing,
So fragile-sweet, so Mary-mild,
I thought her name Marie ;
No other name methought could cling
To any one so fair as she.

And when we came at last to meet,
I spoke a simple word to her,
“ Where are you going, Marie ? ”
She answered and she did not smile,
But oh, her voice,—her voice so sweet,
“ Down to St. Irénée,”
And so passed on to walk her mile,
And left the lonely road to me.

Duncan Campbell Scott.

And as the night came on apace
With stars above the darkened hills,
I heard perpetually,
Chiming along the falling hours,
On the deep dusk that mellow phrase,
“Down to Saint Irénée :”
It seemed as if the stars and flowers
Should all go there with me.

The End of the Day.

I hear the bells at eventide
Peal slowly one by one,
Near and far off they break and glide,
Across the stream float faintly beautiful
The antiphonal bells of Hull ;
The day is done, done, done,
The day is done.

The dew has gathered in the flowers
Like tears from some unconscious deep,
The swallows whirl around the towers,
The light runs out beyond the long cloud bars,

Later Canadian Poems.

And leaves the single stars ;
'Tis time for sleep, sleep, sleep,
'Tis time for sleep.

The hermit thrush begins again,
Timorous eremite,
That song of risen tears and pain,
As if the one he loved was far away :
" Alas ! another day—"
" And now Good Night, Good Night,"
" Good Night."

The Fifteenth of April.

Pallid saffron glows the broken stubble,
Brimmed with silver lie the ruts,
Purple the ploughed hill ;
Down a sluice with break and bubble
Hollow falls the rill ;
Falls and spreads and searches,
Where, beyond the wood,
Starts a group of silver birches,
Bursting into bud.

Duncan Campbell Scott.

Under Venus sings the vesper sparrow,
Down a path of rosy gold
Floats the slender moon ;
Ringing from the rounded barrow
Rolls the robin's tune ;
Lighter than the robin ; hark !
Quivering silver-strong
From the field a hidden shore-lark
Shakes his sparkling song.

Now the dewy sounds begin to dwindle,
Dimmer grow the burnished rills,
Breezes creep and halt,
Soon the guardian night shall kindle
In the violet vault,
All the twinkling tapers
Touched with steady gold,
Burning through the lawny vapors
Where they float and fold.

Later Canadian Poems.

September.

The morns are grey with haze and faintly cold,
The early sunsets arc the west with red,
The stars are misty silver overhead,
Above the dawn Orion lies outrolled.
Now all the slopes are slowly growing gold,
And in the dales a deeper silence dwells ;
The crickets mourn with funeral flutes and bells
For days before the summer had grown old.

Now the night gloom with hurrying wings is stirred,
Strangely the comrad pipings rise and sink,
The birds are following in the pathless dark
The footsteps of the pilgrim summer. Hark !
Was that the redstart or the bobolink ?
That lonely cry the summer-hearted bird ?

Duncan Campbell Scott.

Ottawa.

City about whose brow the north winds blow,
Girdled with woods and shod with river foam,
Called by a name as old as Troy or Rome,
Be great as they but pure as thine own snow ;
Rather flash up amid the auroral glow,
The Lamia city of the northern star,
Than be so hard with craft or wild with war,
Peopled with deeds remembered for their woe.

Thou art too bright for guile, too young for tears,
And thou wilt live to be too strong for time ;
For he may mock thee with his furrowed frowns,
But thou wilt grow in calm throughout the years,
Cinctured with peace and crowned with power sublime,
The maiden queen of all the towered towns.

Later Canadian Poems.

At Les Éboulements.

The bay is set with ashy sails,
 With purple shades that fade and flee,
And curling by in silver wales,
 The tide is straining from the sea.

The grassy points are slowly drowned,
 The water laps and overrolls
The wicker pêche; with shallow sound
 A light wave labours on the shoals.

The crows are feeding in the foam,
 They rise in crowds tumultuously,
“Come home,” they cry, “come home,—come home,”
 “And leave the marshes to the sea.”

Duncan Campbell Scott.

Life and Death.

I thought of death beside the lonely sea
That went beyond the limit of my sight,
Seeming the image of his mastery,
The semblance of his huge and gloomy might.

But firm beneath the sea went the great earth,
With sober bulk and adamantine hold,
The water but a mantle for her girth,
That played about her splendour fold on fold.

And life seemed like this dear familiar shore
That stretched from the wet sand's last wavy crease,
Beneath the sea's remote and sombre roar,
To inland stillness and the wilds of peace.

Death seems triumphant only here and there ;
Life is the sovereign presence everywhere.

Later Canadian Poems.

For Remembrance.

It would be sweet to think when we are old
Of all the pleasant days that came to pass,
That here we took the berries from the grass,
There charmed the bees with pans, and smoke unrolled,
And spread the melon-nets when nights were cold,
Or pulled the blood-root in the underbrush,
And marked the ringing of the tawny thrush,
While all the west was broken burning gold.

And so I bind with rhymes these memories,
As girls press pansies in the poet's leaves
And find them afterward with sweet surprise ;
Or treasure petals mingled with perfume,
Loosing them in the days when April grieves ;
A subtle summer in the rainy room.

Duncan Campbell Scott.

The Reed-player.

By a dim shore where water darkening
Took the last light of spring,
I went beyond the tumult, harkening
For some diviner thing.

Where the bats flew from the black elms like leaves,
Over the ebon pool
Brooded the bittern's cry, as one that grieves
Lands ancient, bountiful.

I saw the fire-flies shine below the wood
Above the shallows dank,
As Uriel from some great altitude,
The planets rank on rank.

And now unseen along the shrouded mead
One went under the hill ;
He blew a cadence on his mellow reed,
That trembled and was still.

It seemed as if a line of amber fire
Had shot the gathered dusk,
As if had blown a wind from ancient Tyre
Laden with myrrh and musk.

Later Canadian Poems.

He gave his luring note amid the fern
 Its enigmatic fall,
Haunted the hollow dusk with golden turn
 And argent interval.

I could not know the message that he bore,
 The springs of life from me
Hidden ; his incommunicable lore
 As much a mystery.

And as I followed far the magic player
 He passed the maple wood,
And when I passed the stars had risen there,
 And there was solitude.

Autumn Song.

Sing me a song of the Autumn clear,
 With the mellow days and the ruddy eves ;
Sing me a song of the ending year,
 With the piled-up sheaves.

Sing me a song of the apple bowers,
 Of the great grapes the vine-field yields,

Duncan Campbell Scott.

Of the ripe peaches bright as flowers,
And the rich hop-fields.

Sing me a song of the fallen mast,
Of the sharp odor the pomace sheds,
Of the purple beets left last
In the garden beds.

Sing me a song of the toiling bees,
Of the long flight and the honey won,
Of the white hives under the apple-trees
In the hazy sun.

Sing me a song of the thyme and the sage,
Of sweet marjoram in the garden grey
Where goes my love Armitage
Pulling the summer savory.

Sing me a song of the red deep,
The long glow the sun leaves,
Of the swallows taking a last sleep,
In the barn eaves.

Later Canadian Poems.

Song.

Here's the last rose,
And the end of June,
With the tulips gone,
And the lilacs strewn ;
A light wind blows
From the Golden West,
The bird is charmed
To her secret nest :
Here's the last rose—
In the violet sky
A great star shines,
The gnats are drawn
To the purple pines ;
On the magic lawn
A shadow flows
From the summer moon :
Here's the last rose,
And the end of the tune.

Duncan Campbell Scott.

Off Rivière du Loup.

Oh, ship incoming from the sea,
With all your cloudy tower of sail,
Dashing the water to the lee,
And leaning grandly to the gale ;

The sunset pageant in the West
Has filled your canvas curves with rose,
And jewelled every toppling crest
That crashes into silver snows.

You know the joy of coming home,
After long leagues to France or Spain,
You feel the clear Canadian foam,
And the gulf water heave again.

Between the sombre purple hills
That cool the sunset's molten bars,
You will go on as the wind wills
Beneath the river's roof of stars.

You will toss onward towards the lights
That spangle over the lonely pier,
By hamlets glimmering on the heights,
By level islands black and clear.

Later Canadian Poems.

You will go on beyond the tide,
Through brimming plains of olive sedge,
Through paler shallows light and wide,
The rapids piled along the ledge.

At evening off some reedy bay
You will swing slowly on your chain,
And catch the scent of dewy hay
Soft blowing from the pleasant plain.



FREDERICK GEORGE SCOTT.

Frederick George Scott.

In Memoriam.

Those killed in the Canadian North-West, 1885.

Growing to full manhood now,
With the care-lines on our brow,
We, the youngest of the nations,
With no childish lamentations,
Weep, as only strong men weep,
For the noble hearts that sleep,
Pillowed where they fought and bled,
The loved and lost, our glorious dead !

Toil and sorrow come with age,
Manhood's rightful heritage ;
Toil our arms more strong shall render,
Sorrow make our hearts more tender,
In the heartlessness of time ;
Honour lays a wreath sublime—
Deathless glory—where they bled,
Our loved and lost, our glorious dead !

Wild the prairie grasses wave
O'er each hero's new-made grave ;

Later Canadian Poems.

Time shall write such wrinkles o'er us,
But the future spreads before us
Glorious in that sunset land—
Nerving every heart and hand,
Comes a brightness none can shed,
But the dead, the glorious dead !

Lay them where they fought and fell ;
Every heart shall ring their knell,
For the lessons they have taught us,
For the glory they have brought us.
Tho' our hearts are sad and bowed,
Nobleness still makes us proud—
Proud of light their names shall shed
In the roll-call of our dead !

Growing to full manhood now,
With the care-lines on our brow,
We, the youngest of the nations,
With no childish lamentations,
Weep, as only strong men weep,
For the noble hearts that sleep
Where the call of duty led,
Where the lonely prairies spread,
Where for us they fought and bled,
Our loved, our lost, our glorious dead.

Frederick George Scott.

The Two Mistresses.

Ah woe is me, my heart's in sorry plight,
Enamoured equally of Wrong and Right ;
 Right hath the sweeter grace,
 But Wrong the prettier face :
Ah woe is me, my heart's in sorry plight.

And Right is jealous that I let Wrong stay ;
Yet Wrong seems sweeter when I turn away.
 Right sober is, like Truth,
 But Wrong is in her youth ;
So Right is jealous that I let Wrong stay.

When I am happy, left alone with Right,
Then Wrong flits by and puts her out of sight ;
 I follow and I fret,
 And once again forget
That I am happy, left alone with Right.

Ah God! do Thou have pity on my heart!
A puppet blind am I, take Thou my part!
 Chasten my wandering love,
 Set it on things above:
Ah God! do Thou have pity on my heart!

Later Canadian Poems.

The Frenzy of Prometheus.

The ocean beats its noontide harmonies
Upon the sunlit lines of cragged coast,
And a wild rhythm pulses thro' my brain
With pauses and responsive melodies,
And sky and ocean, air and day and night
Topple and reel upon my burning blood,
Run to and fro, whirl round and round and round,
Till, lo ! the cosmic madness breathes a strain
Of perfect music thro' the universe.
I hear it with my ears, eyes, hands and feet,
I drink it with my breath, my skin sucks in
At every fevered pore fine threads of sound,
Which plunge vibrations of the wind-swept harp
Of earth and heaven, deep into my soul,
Till each sense kindles with a freshened life,
And thoughts arise which bring me ease from pain.

O peace, sweet peace ! I melt and ebb away,
On softened rocks outstretch relaxèd limbs,
With half-shut eyes deliciously enthralled.
What passion, what delight, what ecstasies !
Joy fills my veins with rivers of excess ;
I rave, I quiver, as with languid eyes

Frederick George Scott.

I see the hot air dance upon the rocks,
And sky, sea, headlands blend in murmurous haze.

Now grander, with the organ's bass that rolls
The under-world in darkness thro' despair
Of any day-dawn on its inky skies,
The music rolls around me and above,
From shattered cliffs, from booming caverns' mouths,
Pierced by the arrow-screams of frightened gulls.
Now strength subdued, but waxing more and more,
Reanimates my limbs ; I feel my power
Full as the flooding ocean, or the force
Which grinds the glaciers on their boulder feet.
My hands could pluck up mountains by the roots,
My arm could hurl back ocean from the shore
To wallow in his frothy bed. What hate ! what scorn !
What limitless imaginations stretch
And burst my mind immense ; I stand apart,
I am alone, all-glorious, supreme ;
My huge form like a shadow sits and broods
Upon the globe, gigantic as the shade
Eclipsing moons. With bowed head on my hand
In gloom excessive, now, behold, I see
Beneath my feet the stream of human life,
The sad procession of humanity.

Later Canadian Poems.

They come, the sons of Hellas, beautiful,
Swift-minded, lithe, with luscious laughing lips,
That suck delight from every tree of life ;
Born of the sunshine, winds and sounding sea.
They pass, and, lo, a mightier nation moves
In stern battalions trampling forests down,
Cleaving the mountains, paving desert lands
With bones that e'en when bleaching face the foe ;
Welding soft outskirt nations into iron,
An iron hand to grasp and hold the world.

Now dust, like smoke, from Asia's central steppes
Darkens the rigid white of mountain peaks,
And the plains bristle with the Tartar hordes,
Suckled of mares, flat-faced, implacable,
Deadly in war, revengeful, treacherous,
Brown as the craggy glens of Caucasus.
They pass, and nations pass, and like a dream
A throne emerges from the western sea,—
The latest empire of a dying world.
E'en as I look its splendor melts away,
And round me, gathering volume, music rolls,
Till sinews crack and eyes are blind with power,
Till struggles, battles mixed with smoke and blood,
Men, nations, life and death, and desolate cries,

Frederick George Scott.

Melt in the inner pulses in my ears
And a wild tempest blows the daylight out.

And now I am alone beneath the stars,
Alone, in infinite silence. Am I God,
That I am so supreme? Whence is this power?
Cannot my will repeople these waste lands?
I cry aloud, the vault of space resounds,
And hollow-sounding echoes, from the stars
Rebounding, shake the earth and crinkle up
The sea in million furrows. Lo, the stars
Now fade, the sun arises, it is day,
Half day, half night; the sun hath lost his strength.
I am his equal, nay I am his king!
I rise and move across the earth, the seas
Have vanished, and I tread their empty beds,
And crush down continents of powdered bones.

O great light, late supreme, what need of thee?
For all are dead, men, nations, life and death,
And God is dead and here alone am I,
I, with strong hands to pluck thee from the sky,
Boundless in passions, will, omnipotent.
The impulses centre in my heart
Which erstwhile shook the universe. O Sun,
Acknowledge now thy king, put down thy head
Beneath my feet, and lift me higher still

Later Canadian Poems.

To regions that out-top the adoring spheres,
And bask in primal thought, too vast to shape
Into similitude of earthly things.

I would have all, know all. I thirst and pant
And hunger for the universe. Now from the earth,
Beneath thy rays, O Sun, the steams arise,
Sheeting the world's dead face in film of cloud,
The voices of the dead. Peace, let me be,
Go on thy way, spent power, leave me here
To reign in silence, rave and scorn and hate,
To glory in my strength, tear down the skies,
Trample the crumbling mountains under foot,
Laugh at the tingling stars, burn with desire
Unconquerable, till the universe
Is shattered at the core, its splinters flung
By force centrifugal beyond the light,
Until the spent stars from their orbits reel,
And hissing down the flaming steep of space
With voice of fire proclaim me God alone.

Frederick George Scott.

Rome.

Imperial city, slumb'ring on the throne

Of vanished empire, once thy voice and hands

Rocked the wide world ; thy fingers wove the lands
Into thy girdle ; who for crown alone

Didst wear the stars. Yet still in undertone

Man hears thy deathless utterance, tho' Time's sands

Roll centuries ; thou clasp'st the earth with bands
Of speech, art, law, and subtle powers unknown.

Thou wast not meant to die ; thy mighty heart

Pulsed with the universe. Thy deeds of old

Flame like the sunset skies thro' clouds which throng ;

They blazon on thy throne a name apart

In red of mighty victories, in gold

Of all things valorous and great and strong.

Later Canadian Poems.

Shakespeare.

Unseen in the great minster dome of time,
Whose shafts are centuries, its spangled roof
The vaulted universe, our master sits,
And organ-voices like a far-off chime
Roll thro' the aisles of thought. The sunlight flits
From arch to arch, and, as he sits aloof,
Kings, heroes, priests, in concourse vast, sublime,
Glances of love and cries from battle-field,
His wizard power breathes on the living air.
Warm faces gleam and pass, child, woman, man,
In the long multitude ; but he, concealed,
Our bard eludes us, vainly each face we scan,
It is not he ; his features are not there ;
But, being thus hid, his greatness is revealed.

Frederick George Scott.

Columbus.

He caught the words which ocean thunders hurled
On heedless eastern coasts, in days gone by,
And westward with the stars on midnight sky
His strong thought travelled 'gainst the moving world.
So, onward to the line of mist which curled
Around the setting sun, with steadfast eye,
He pushed his course, and trusting God on high
Threw wide the portals of a larger world.

The heart that watched through those drear autumn nights
The wide dark sea, and man's new empire sought
Alone, uncheered, hath wrought a deed sublime,
Which, like a star behind the polar lights,
Will shine through splendours of man's utmost thought
Down golden eras to the end of time.

Later Canadian Poems.

Time,

I saw Time in his workshop carving faces ;
 Scattered around his tools lay, blunting griefs,
 Sharp cares that cut out deeply in reliefs
Of light and shade ; sorrows that smooth the traces
Of what were smiles. Nor yet without fresh graces
 His handiwork, for ofttimes rough were ground
 And polished, oft the pinched made smooth and round ;
The calm look, too, the impetuous fire replaces.

Long time I stood and watched ; with hideous grin
 He took each heedless face between his knees,
 And graved and scarred and bleached with boiling tears.
I wondering turned to go, when, lo ! my skin
 Feels crumpled, and in glass my own face sees
 Itself all changed, scarred, careworn, white with years.

Frederick George Scott.

The Feud.

"I hear a cry from the Sansard cave,
O mother, will no one hearken?
A cry of the lost, will no one save?
A cry of the dead tho' the oceans rave,
And the scream of a gull as he wheels o'er a grave,
While the shadows darken and darken."—

"Oh hush thee, child, for the night is wet,
And the cloud-caves split asunder,—
With lightning in a jagged fret,
Like the gleam of a salmon in the net,
When the rocks are rich in the red sunset
And the stream rolls down in thunder."—

"Mother, O mother, a pain at my heart,
A pang like the pang of dying."—
"Oh hush thee, child, for the wild birds dart
Up and down and close and part,
Wheeling round where the black cliffs start,
And the foam at their feet is flying."—

"O mother, a strife like the black clouds' strife,
And a peace that cometh after."—

"Hush, child, for peace is the end of life,

Later Canadian Poems.

And the heart of a maiden finds peace as a wife,
But the sky and the cliffs and the ocean are rife
With the storm and thunder's laughter.—

Come in, my sons, come in and rest,
For the shadows darken and darken,
And your sister is pale as the white swan's breast,
And her eyes are fixed and her lips are pressed
In the death of a name ye might have guessed
Had ye twain been here to hearken.”—

“Hush, mother, a corpse lies on the sand,
And the spray is round it driven;
It lies on its face, and one white hand
Points thro' the mist on the belt of strand
To where the cliffs of Sansard stand
And the ocean's strength is riven.”—

“Was it God, my sons, who laid him there?
Or the sea that left him sleeping?”—

“Nay, mother, our dirks where his heart was bare,
As swift as the rain thro' the teeth of the air;
And the foam-fingers play in the Saxon's hair,
While the tides are round him creeping.”—

“Oh, curses on you, hand and head,
Like the rains in this wild weather,

Frederick George Scott.

The guilt of blood is swift and dread,
Your sister's face is cold and dead,
Ye may not part whom God would wed
And love hath knit together."

Samson.

Plunged in night, I sit alone
Eyeless on this dungeon stone,
Naked, shaggy and unkempt,
Dreaming dreams no soul hath dreamt.

Rats and vermin round my feet
Play unharmed, companions sweet,
Spiders weave me overhead
Silken curtains for my bed.

Day by day the mould I smell
Of this fungus-blistered cell ;
Nightly in my haunted sleep
O'er my face the lizards creep.

Gyves of iron scrape and burn
Wrists and ankles when I turn,

Later Canadian Poems.

And my collared neck is raw
With the teeth of brass that gnaw.

God of Israel, canst thou see
All my fierce captivity?
Do thy sinews feel my pains?
Hearest thou the clanking chains?

Thou who madest me so fair,
Strong and buoyant as the air,
Tall and noble as a tree,
With the passions of the sea,

Swift as horse upon my feet,
Fierce as lion in my heat,
Rending, like a wisp of hay,
All that dared withstand my way,

Canst thou see me through the gloom
Of this subterranean tomb,—
Blinded tiger in his den,
Once the lord and prince of men?

Clay was I ; the potter Thou
With Thy thumb-nail smooth'dst my brow,
Roll'dst the spital-moistened sands
Into limbs between Thy hands.

Frederick George Scott.

Thou didst pour into my blood
Fury of the fire and flood,
And upon the boundless skies
Thou didst first unclothe my eyes.

And my breath of life was flame
God-like from the source it came,
Whirling round like furious wind
Thoughts upgathered in the mind.

Strong Thou mad'st me, till at length
All my weakness was my strength ;
Tortured am I, blind and wrecked,
For a faulty architect.

From the woman at my side,
Was I woman-like to hide
What she asked me, as if fear
Could my iron heart come near ?

Nay, I scorned and scorn again
Cowards who their tongues restrain ;
Cared I no more for Thy laws
Than a wind of scattered straws.

When the earth quaked at my name
And my blood was all aflame,

Later Canadian Poems.

Who was I to lie, and cheat
Her who clung about my feet ?

From thy open nostrils blow
Wind and tempest, rain and snow ;
Dost thou curse them on their course
For the fury of their force ?

Tortured am I, wracked and bowed,
But the soul within is proud ;
Dungeon fetters cannot still
Forces of the tameless will.

Israel's God come down and see
All my fierce captivity ;
Let thy sinews feel my pains,
With thy fingers lift my chains.

Then, with thunder loud and wild,
Comfort thou thy rebel child,
And with lightning split in twain
Loveless heart and sightless brain.

Give me splendour in my death,
Not this sickening dungeon breath,
Creeping down my blood like slime,
Till it wastes me in my prime.

Frederick George Scott.

Give me back, for one blind hour,
Half my former rage and power,
And some giant crisis send
Meet to prove a hero's end.

Then, O God, Thy mercy show—
Crush him in the overthrow
At whose life they scorn and point,
By its greatness out of joint.

In Via Mortis.

O ye great company of dead that sleep
Under the world's green rind, I come to you,
With warm, soft limbs, with eyes that laugh and weep,
Heart strong to love, and brain pierced through and through
With thoughts whose rapid lightnings make my day—
To you my life-stream courses on its way
Through margin-shallows of the eternal deep.

And naked shall I come among you, shorn
Of all life's vanities, its light and power,
Its earthly lusts, its petty hate and scorn,
The gifts and gold I treasured for an hour ;

Later Canadian Poems.

And even from this house of flesh laid bare,
A soul transparent as heat-quivering air,
Into your fellowship I shall be born.

I know you not, great forms of giant kings
Who held dominion in your iron hands,
Who toyed with battles and all valourous things,
Counting yourselves as gods when on the sands
Ye piled the earth's rock fragments in an heap
To mark and guard the grandeur of your sleep,
And quaffed the cup which death, our mother, brings.

I know you not, great warriors, who have fought
When blood flowed like a river at your feet,
And each death which your thunderous swordstrokes wrought,
Than love's wild rain of kisses was more sweet.
I know you not, great minds, who with the pen
Have graven on the fiery hearts of men
Hopes that breed hope and thoughts that kindle thought.

But ye are there, ingathered in the realm
Where tongueless spirits speak from heart to heart,
And eyeless mariners without a helm
Steer down the seas where ever close and part
The windless clouds ; and all ye know is this,
Ye are not as ye were in pain or bliss,
But a strange numbness doth all thought o'erwhelm.

Frederick George Scott.

And I shall meet you, O ye mighty dead,
Come late into your kingdom through the gates
Of one fierce anguish whitherto I tread,
With heart that now forgets, now meditates
Upon the wide fields stretching far away
Where the dead wander past the bounds of day,
Past life, past death, past every pain and dread.

Oft, when the winter sun slopes down to rest
Across the long, crisp fields of gilded white,
And without sound upon earth's level breast
The grey tide floods around of drowning night,
A whisper, like a distant battle's roll
Heard over mountains, creeps into my soul
And there I entertain it like a guest.

It is the echo of your former pains,
Great dead, who lie so still beneath the ground,
Its voice is as the night wind after rains,
The flight of eagle wings which once were bound,
And as I listen in the starlit air
My spirit waxeth stronger than despair
Till in your might I break life's prison chains.

Then mount I swiftly to your dark abodes
Invisible, beyond sight's reach, where now ye dwell
In houses wrought of dreams on dusky roads

Later Canadian Poems.

Which lead in mazes whither none may tell,
For they who thread them faint beside the way
And ever as they pass through twilight grey
Doubt walks beside them and a terror goads.

And there the great dead welcome me and bring
Their cups of tasteless pleasure to my mouth.
Here am I little worth, there am I king,
For pulsing life still slakes my spirit's drouth
And he who yet doth hold the gift of life
Is mightier than the heroes of past strife
Who have been mowed in death's great harvesting.

And here and there along the silent streets
I see some face I knew, perchance I loved ;
And as I call it each blank wall repeats
The uttered name, and swift the form hath moved
And heedless of me passes on and on,
Till lo, the vision from my sight hath gone
Softly as night at touch of dawn retreats.

Yet must life's vision fade and I shall come,
O mighty dead, into your hidden land,
When these eyes see not and these lips are dumb,
And all life's flowers slip from this nerveless hand ;
Then will ye gather round me like a tide

Frederick George Scott.

And with your faces the strange scenery hide
While your weird music doth each sense benumb.

So would I live this life's brief span, great dead,
As ye once lived it, with an iron will,
A heart of steel to conquer, a mind fed
On richest hopes and purposes, until
Well pleased ye set for me a royal throne,
And welcome as confederate with your own
The soul gone from me on my dying bed.



E. PAULINE JOHNSON.

Supplement.

As Redmen Die.

Captive! Is there a hell to him like this?

• A taunt more galling than the Huron's hiss?

He—proud and scornful, he—who laughed at law,

He—scion of the deadly Iroquois,

He—the bloodthirsty, he—the Mohawk chief,

He—who despises pain and sneers at grief,

Here in the hated Huron's vicious clutch,

That even captive, he disdains to touch.

Captive! But *never* conquered! Mohawk brave

Stoops not to be to *any* man a slave;

Least, to the puny tribe his soul abhors,

The tribe whose wigwams sprinkle Simcoe's shores.

With scowling brow he stoically stands by,

Watching, with haughty and defiant eye,

His captors, as they counsel o'er his fate,

Or strive his boldness to intimidate.

Then fling they unto him the choice :

Later Canadian Poems,

“Wilt thou

Walk o'er the bed of fire that waits thee now—
Walk with uncovered feet upon the coals
Till thou dost reach the ghostly Land of Souls,
And with thy Mohawk death-song please our ear?
Or wilt thou with the women rest thee here?
His eyes flash like the eagle's, and his hands
Clench at the insult. Like a god he stands.
“Prepare the fire!” he scornfully demands.

He knoweth not that soon this jeering band
Will bite the dust—will lick the Mohawk's hand;
Will kneel and cower at the Mohawk's feet;
Will shrink when Mohawk war-drums wildly beat.
His death will be avenged with hideous hate
By Iroquois swift to annihilate
His vile, detested captors that now flaunt
Their war-clubs in his face with sneer and taunt,
Nor thinking soon that reeking, red and raw,
Their scalps will deck the belts of Iroquois.

The path of coals outstretches, white with heat,
A forest fir's length—ready for his feet.
Unflinching as a rock he steps along
The burning mass—and sings his fierce war-song—
Sings as he sang when once he used to roam
Throughout the forests of his southern home,

Supplement.

Where down the Genesee the water roars,
Where gentle Mohawk purls atween its shores,—
Songs that of exploits and of prowess tell,—
Songs of the Iroquois invincible.
Up the long trail of fire he boasting goes,
Dancing a war-dance to defy his foes.
His flesh is scorched, his muscles burn and shrink,
But still he dances to death's awful brink.
The eagle plume that crests his haughty head
Will *never* droop until his heart be dead.

Slower and slower yet his footstep swings,
Wilder and wilder still his death-song rings,
Fiercer and fiercer thro' the forest sounds
His voice, that leaps to Happier Hunting Grounds.
One savage yell—

Then, loyal to his race,
He bends to death—but *never* to disgrace.

—E. PAULINE JOHNSON.

Later Canadian Poems.

In Northern Skies.

Webs of silver, spun in the twilight's travail,
Spring into sight when the orange rim has pass'd ;
Silver webs that a diamond dew-world spangles,
Webs of crystal glittering at glowing angles
Flash into flame at the zenith, rosily massed ;

Crowns of silver, colossal, shining, mighty,
Serenely set upon brows, straight, bright, and bland ;
Girdles that grace a priestess high in the azure,
Zones that encircle a queen in her safe embrasure,
Gleam on the verge of midnight's velvet strand ;

Shields of silver, studded with fires of topaz,
Harps that are silver-strung, rimm'd pure with pearls ,
Rapiers rich with gems that the gloom encrusteth,
Scythes and scabbards that never a wet moon rusteth,
Wheels of gold that a tireless helmsman twirls ;

Sails of silver, spread to the silent ether,
Ships of state that ride with a burnished keel ;
Galleys grand that sparkle to magic measure,
Dipping divinely down in a radiant pleasure,
Hulls of gold that round with the star-worlds wheel—

Supplement.

All go by—sails, shields, crowns, gems and girdles.

Hearken the ring of the mighty silvern chains !

Hearken the clang and the clash, the reverberations,

The golden din, as the shining constellations

Slowly swing and sink to the dusky plains !

—S. FRANCES HARRISON.

(*Seranus*).

Two Visions.

Where close the curving mountains drew,

To clasp the stream in their embrace,

With every outline, curve, and hue

Reflected in its placid face,

The ploughman stopped his team to watch

The train, as swift it thundered by ;

Some distant glimpse of life to catch,

He strains his eager, wistful eye.

The morning freshness lies on him,

Just wakened from his balmy dreams ;

The travellers, begrimed and dim,

Think longingly of mountain streams.

Later Canadian Poems.

Oh, for the joyous mountain air,
The fresh, delightful autumn day
Among the hills ! The ploughman there
Must have perpetual holiday !

And he, as all day long he guides
His steady plough, with patient hand,
Thinks of the flying train that glides
Into some new, enchanted land,

Where, day by day, no plodding round
Wearies the frame and dulls the mind—
Where life thrills keen to sight and sound,
With ploughs and furrows left behind.

Even so, to each the untrod ways
Of life are touched by fancy's glow,
That ever sheds its brightest rays
Upon the path we do not know.

—AGNES MAULE MACHAR.

(*Fidelis*).

Supplement.

Re-Voyage.

What of the days when we two dreamed together?

Days marvellously fair,

As lightsome as a skyward-floating feather

Sailing on summer air—

Summer, summer, that came drifting through

Fate's hand to me and you.

What of the days, my dear? I sometimes wonder

If you too wish this sky

Could be the blue we sailed so softly under

In that sun-kissed July;

Sailed in the warm and yellow afternoon,

With hearts in touch and tune.

Have you no longing to relive the dreaming

Adrift in my canoe?

To watch my paddle blade all wet and gleaming

Cleaving the waters through?

To lie wind-blown and wave-caressed until

Your restless pulse grows still?

Do you not long to listen to the purling

Of foam athwart the keel?

To hear the nearing rapids softly swirling

Later Canadian Poems.

Among their stones, to feel
The boat's unsteady tremor as it braves
The wild and snarling waves?

What need of question, what of your replying?
Oh! well I know that you
Would toss the world away to be but lying
Again in my canoe,
In listless indolence entranced and lost,
Wave-rocked and passion-tossed.

Ah me! my paddle failed me in the steering
Across love's shoreless seas;
All reckless, I had ne'er a thought of fearing
Such dreary days as these,
When through the self-same rapids we dash by,
My lone canoe and I.

—E. PAULINE JOHNSON.

Supplement,

The Wind of Death.

The wind of death, that softly blows
The last warm petal from the rose,
The last dry leaf from off the tree,
To-night has come to breathe on me.

There was a time I learned to hate,
As weaker mortals learn to love;
The passion held me fixed as fate,
Burned in my veins early and late,
But now a wind falls from above—

The wind of death, that silently
Enshroudeth friend and enemy.

There was a time my soul was thrilled
By keen ambition's whip and spur;
My master forced me where he willed,
And with his power my life was filled,
But now the old-time pulses stir

How faintly in the wind of death,
That bloweth lightly as a breath!

Later Canadian Poems.

And once, but once, at Love's dear feet,
I yielded strength, and life, and heart;
His look turned bitter into sweet,
His smile made all the world complete;
The wind blows loves like leaves apart—

The wind of death, that tenderly
Is blowing 'twixt my love and me.

O wind of death, that darkly blows
Each separate ship of human woes
Far out on a mysterious sea,
I turn, I turn my face to thee.

—ETHELWYN WETHERALD.

Supplement.

The City Tree.

I stand within the stony, arid town,
I gaze for ever on the narrow street ;
I hear for ever passing up and down,
The ceaseless tramp of feet.

I know no brotherhood with far-lock'd woods,
Where branches bourgeon from a kindred sap ;
Where o'er moss'd roots, in cool, green solitudes,
Small silver brooklets lap.

No em'rald vines creep wistfully to me,
And lay their tender fingers on my bark ;
High may I toss my boughs, yet never see
Day's first most glorious spark.

When to and fro my branches wave and sway,
Answ'ring the feeble wind that faintly calls,
They kiss no kindred boughs but touch alway
The stones of climbing walls.

My heart is never pierc'd with song of bird ;
My leaves know nothing of that glad unrest,
Which makes a flutter in the still woods heard,
When wild birds build a nest.

Later Canadian Poems.

There never glance the eyes of violets up,
Blue into the deep splendour of my green :
Nor falls the sunlight to the primrose cup,
My quivering leaves between.

Not mine, not mine to turn from soft delight
Of woodbine breathings, honey sweet, and warm ;
With kin embattl'd rear my glorious height
To greet the coming storm !

Not mine to watch across the free, broad plains
The whirl of stormy cohorts sweeping fast ;
The level, silver lances of great rains,
Blown onward by the blast.

Not mine the clamouring tempest to defy,
Tossing the proud crest of my dusky leaves :
Defender of small flowers that trembling lie
Against my barky greaves.

Not mine to watch the wild swan drift above,
Balanced on wings that could not choose between
The wooing sky, blue as the eye of love,
And my own tender green.

And yet my branches spread, a kingly sight,
In the close prison of the drooping air :

Supplement.

When sun-vex'd noons are at their fiery height,
My shade is broad, and there

Come city toilers, who their hour of ease
Weave out to precious seconds as they lie
Pillow'd on horny hands, to hear the breeze
Through my great branches die.

I see no flowers, but às the children race
With noise and clamour through the dusty street,
I see the bud of many an angel face—
I hear their merry feet.

No violets look up, but shy and grave,
The children pause and lift their crystal eyes
To where my emerald branches call and wave—
As to the mystic skies.

—ISABELLA VALANCY CRAWFORD.

Later Canadian Poems.

At Husking Time.

At husking time the tassel fades
To brown above the yellow blades
Whose rustling sheath enswathes the corn
That bursts its chrysalis in scorn
Longer to lie in prison shades.

Among the merry lads and maids
The creaking ox-cart slowly wades
'Twixt stalks and stubble, sacked, and torn
At husking time.

The prying pilot crow persuades
The flock to join in thieving raids ;
The sly racoon with craft inborn
His portion steals—from plenty's horn .
His pouch the saucy chipmunk lades
At husking time.

—E. PAULINE JOHNSON.

Supplement.

Drifting Among The Thousand Islands.

Never a ripple upon the river,
As it lies like a mirror, beneath the moon,
—Only the shadows tremble and quiver,
'Neath the balmy breath of a night in June !

All dark and silent, each shadowy island
Like a silhouette lies on its silver ground,
While, just above us, a rocky highland
Towers, grim and dusk, with its pine-trees crowned.

Never a sound save the wave's soft plashing,
As the boat drifts idly the shore along,—
And the darting fire-flies, silently flashing,
Gleam, living diamonds, the woods among ;

And the night-hawk flits o'er the bay's deep bosom,
And the loon's laugh breaks through the midnight calm,
And the luscious breath of the wild vine's blossom
Wafts from the rocks like a tide of balm.

—Drifting ! Why may we not drift forever ?
Let all the world and its worries go !
Let us float and float with the flowing river,
Whither—we neither care nor know !

Later Canadian Poems.

Dreaming a dream, might we ne'er awaken ;
There is joy enough in this passive bliss,—
The wrestling crowd and its cares forsaken,—
Was ever Nirvana more blest than this ?

Nay ! but our hearts are ever lifting
The screen of the present, however fair ;
Not long, not long, can we go on drifting,—
Not long enjoy surcease from care !

Ours is a nobler task and guerdon
Than aimless drifting, however blest ;
Only the heart that can bear the burden
Shall share the joy of the victor's rest.

—AGNES MAULE MACHAR.

(*Fidelis.*)

A Complaint.

How sad to gaze on thee and find
In thy stern eyes no answer kind,
No languorous liftings of those lovely lids,
That tell me love half wishes, half forbids ;
To-know henceforth we are estranged,
That much is past and all is changed.

Supplement.

And though, for your dear sake, I know
It is but right it should be so,
How sad to gaze on thee and find
In thy stern eyes no answer kind--

Alas !

How sad it is—Alas—how sad !

How hard to leave thy hand unclasped,
The hand which mine so oft hath grasped,
To watch thy upturned delicate white wrist,
And watching wearily, leave it unvisited !
To gaze with longing evermore,
And yearn to be as once before ;
O, though for your dear sake I dare
Not show my grief and my despair,
How hard to leave thy hand unclasped—

Alas !

How hard it is—Alas—how hard !

—S. FRANCES HARRISON.

(*Seranus.*)

Later Canadian Poems.

At Sunset.

To-night the west o'erbrims with warmest dyes,
 Its chalice overflows
With pools of purple coloring the skies,
 Aflood with gold and rose,
And some hot soul seems throbbing close to mine,
As sinks the sun within that world of wine.

I seem to hear a bar of music float,
 And swoon into the west,
My ear can scarcely catch the whispered note,
 But something in my breast
Blends with that strain, till both accord in one,
As cloud and color blend at set of sun.

And twilight comes with gray and restful eyes,
 As ashes follow flame,
But oh ! I heard a voice from those rich skies
 Call tenderly my name ;
It was as if some priestly fingers stole
In benediction o'er my lonely soul.

I know not why, but all my being longed
 And leapt at that sweet call,

Supplement.

My heart reached out its arms, all passion-thronged,
And beat against Fate's wall,
Crying in utter homesickness to be
Near to a heart that loves and leans to me.

—E. PAULINE JOHNSON.

“ O Love Builds on the Azure Sea ”

O, Love builds on the azure sea,
And Love builds on the golden sand ;
And Love builds on the rose-wing'd cloud,
And sometimes Love builds on the land.

O, if Love build on sparkling sea—
And if Love build on golden strand—
And if Love build on rosy cloud—
To Love these are the solid land.

O, Love will build his lily walls,
And Love his pearly roof will rear,—
On cloud or land, or mist or sea—
Love's solid land is everywhere !

—ISABELLA VALANCY CRAWFORD.

Later Canadian Poems.

The Song My Paddle Sings.

West wind, blow from your prairie nest,
Blow from the mountains, blow from the west.
The sail is idle, the sailor too ;
Oh ! wind of the west, we wait for you.
Blow, blow !
I have wooed you so,
But never a favor you bestow.
You rock your cradle the hills between,
But scorn to notice my white lateen.

I stow the sail and unship the mast :
I wooed you long, but my wooing's past ;
My paddle will lull you into rest :
O drowsy wind of the drowsy west,
Sleep, sleep !
By your mountains steep,
Or down where the prairie grasses sweep,
Now fold in slumber your laggard wings,
For soft is the song my paddle sings.

August is laughing across the sky,
Laughing while paddle, canoe and I

Supplement.

Drift, drift,
Where the hills uplift
On either side of the current swift.

The river rolls in its rocky bed,
My paddle is plying its way ahead,
Dip, dip,
When the waters flip
In foam as over their breast we slip.

And oh, the river runs swifter now ;
The eddies circle about my bow :
Swirl, swirl !
How the ripples curl
In many a dangerous pool awhirl !
And far to forward the rapids roar,
Fretting their margin for evermore ;
Dash, dash,
With a mighty crash,
They seethe and boil and bound and splash.

Be strong, O paddle ! be brave, canoe !
The reckless waves you must plunge into.
Reel, reel,
On your trembling keel,
But never a fear my craft will feel.

Later Canadian Poems.

We've raced the rapids ; we're far ahead :
The river slips through its silent bed.
Sway, sway,
As the bubbles spray
And fall in tinkling tunes away.

And up on the hills against the sky,
A fir tree rocking its lullaby
Swings, swings,
Its emerald wings,
Swelling the song that my paddle sings.

—E. PAULINE JOHNSON.

Supplement.

Sometime, I Fear.

Sometime, I fear, but God alone knows when,
 Mine eyes shall gaze on your unseeing eyes,
 On your unheeding ears shall fall my cries,
Your clasp shall cease, your soul go from my ken,
Your great heart be a fire burned out ; ah, then,
 What shall remain for me beneath the skies
 Of glad or good, of beautiful or wise,
That can relume and thrill my life again ?

This shall remain, a love that cannot fail,
 A life that joys in your great joy, yet grieves
 In memory of sweet days fled too soon ;
Sadness divine ! as when November pale
 Sits broken-hearted 'mong her withered leaves,
 And feels the wind about her warm as June.

—ETHELWYN WETHERALD.

Later Canadian Poems.

The Swiftest Thought.

Oh, sounding winds, that tirelessly are blowing
Through the wide star-lit spaces of the night !
Oh, eager rains, that sweep the distant height,
And restless streams impetuously flowing,
And clouds that will delay not in your going,
And ships that sail, and vanish from the sight,
And happy birds that stay not in your flight,
And suns upon your skyey pathway glowing :—

Poor laggards all ! One tender thought outstrips you :
Go, little thought, and tell my love from me
I care for him to-day as yesterday ;
Ah, how its strength and swiftness doth eclipse you,
For now the answer comes invisibly
And instantly—and in the surest way !

—ETHELWYN WETHERALD

Supplement.

At Parting.

Good-by ! good-by ! my soul goes after thee,
Quick as a bird that quickens on the wing,
Softly as winter softens into spring,
And as the moon sways to the swaying sea,
So is my spirit drawn resistlessly ;
Good-by ! yet closer round my life shall cling
Thy tenderness, the priceless offering *
That drifts through distance daily unto me.

O eager soul of mine, fly fast ! fly fast !
Take with thee hope and courage, thoughts that thrill
The heart with gladness under sombre skies ;
O living tenderness ! that no sharp blast
Of bitter fate or circumstance can chill,
My life with thine grows strong—or fails—or dies.

—ETHELWYN WETHERALD.

Later Canadian Poems.

A Forgotten Grief.

In the silence of the morning, while the dews are yet leaf-
hidden,

And all the rare pale lilies lift their faces to the sun,
And the birds are singing madly, all unbidden, all unchid-
den,

And the morning glories echo the sweet chorus when 'tis
done,—

My Heart and I sit singing too for very joy of being—
So bright the yellow sunlight through the leafy boughs
above—

For very joy of knowing, and for very joy of seeing,
My Heart and I sit singing too for very joy of love.

And one by one the bright-winged hours dally and fly over,
And not a cloud in all the golden day can we espy,
For all the world's in love with us, the world that loves a
lover,

And we're in love with all the world, my happy Heart
and I.

And the lambent air is thrilling with a passionate desire :
"To love and live, to live and love, and this is all," we
sing ;

Supplement.

And our song is sweet with laughter and in triumph waxes
higher,

As it floats across the garden where our hopes are blossoming.

Oh, strange ! A sound of measured feet that trample on
our gladness—

I will not look, I will not know, I will not turn my head !
But my Heart will see despite me, and with sudden sighing
sadness

She tells me that the measured feet are following the dead.

A hush upon the bird-notes and a shadow on the flowers,
And an ancient Grief upspeaks to us and chides our joy-
ous song,

And spreads abroad her mantle clouding all the golden
hours,

And sits with us, and talks with us, so long—so long !

For love and life, for sun and flower, we have but sorry
greeting :

“To love and live, to live and love !” O foolish roundelay!

Ah, happiness ! thou laggard dove, swift only in the fleeting !

Ah, dolor ! thy dark pinions bear thee never far away !

—SARA JEANNETTE DUNCAN

